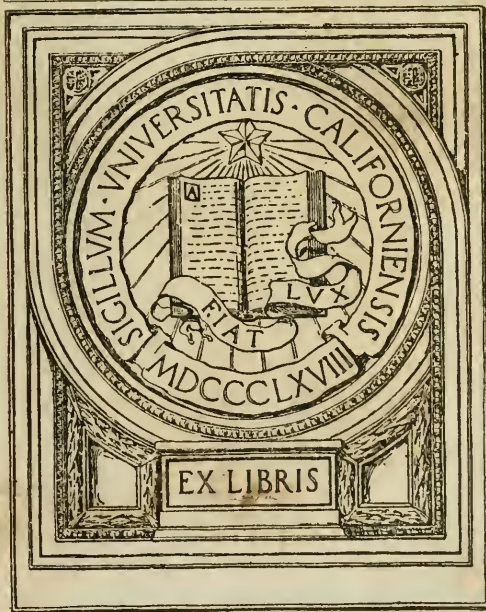


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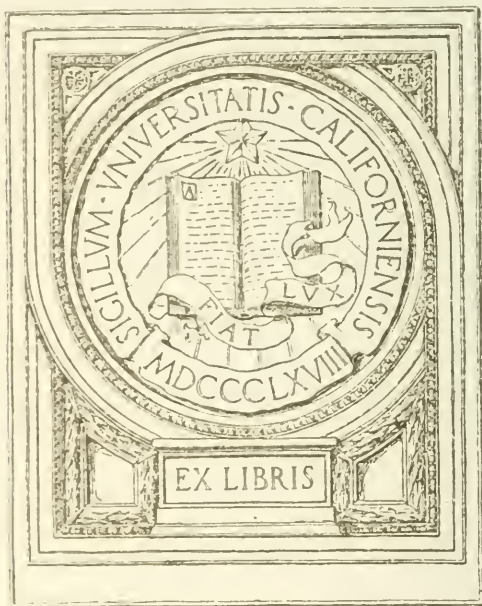
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THE WORKS  
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FRANCIS PARKMAN.

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VOLUME V.



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No. 8.....





*La Salle presenting a petition to Louis XIV.*

Goupilgravure facsimile of the water-color by Adrien Moreau.



LA SALLE AND THE DISCOV-  
ERY OF THE GREAT WEST ❧  
FRANCE AND ENGLAND IN  
NORTH AMERICA · PART THIRD  
BY FRANCIS PARKMAN ❧ ❧ ❧ ❧

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. I.



BOSTON ❧ LITTLE · BROWN  
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TO  
THE CLASS OF 1844,  
Harvard College,  
THIS BOOK IS CORDIALLY DEDICATED  
BY ONE OF THEIR NUMBER.

174088



## PREFACE OF THE ELEVENTH EDITION.

---

WHEN the earlier editions of this book were published, I was aware of the existence of a collection of documents relating to La Salle, and containing important material to which I had not succeeded in gaining access. This collection was in possession of M. Pierre Margry, director of the Archives of the Marine and Colonies at Paris, and was the result of more than thirty years of research. With rare assiduity and zeal, M. Margry had explored not only the vast depository with which he has been officially connected from youth, and of which he is now the chief, but also the other public archives of France, and many private collections in Paris and the provinces. The object of his search was to throw light on the career and achievements of French explorers, and, above all, of La Salle. A collection of extraordinary richness grew gradually upon his hands. In the course

of my own inquiries, I owed much to his friendly aid; but his collections, as a whole, remained inaccessible, since he naturally wished to be the first to make known the results of his labors. An attempt to induce Congress to furnish him with the means of printing documents so interesting to American history was made in 1870 and 1871, by Henry Harrisse, Esq., aided by the American minister at Paris; but it unfortunately failed.

In the summer and autumn of 1872, I had numerous interviews with M. Margry, and at his desire undertook to try to induce some American bookseller to publish the collection. On returning to the United States, I accordingly made an arrangement with Messrs. Little, Brown & Co., of Boston, by which they agreed to print the papers if a certain number of subscriptions should first be obtained. The condition proved very difficult; and it became clear that the best hope of success lay in another appeal to Congress. This was made in the following winter, in conjunction with Hon. E. B. Washburne; Colonel Charles Whittlesey, of Cleveland; O. H. Marshall, Esq., of Buffalo; and other gentlemen interested in early American history. The attempt succeeded. Congress made an appropria-

tion for the purchase of five hundred copies of the work, to be printed at Paris, under direction of M. Margry; and the three volumes devoted to La Salle are at length before the public.

Of the papers contained in them which I had not before examined, the most interesting are the letters of La Salle, found in the original by M. Margry, among the immense accumulations of the Archives of the Marine and Colonies and the Bibliothèque Nationale. The narrative of La Salle's companion, Joutel, far more copious than the abstract printed in 1713, under the title of "*Journal Historique*," also deserves special mention. These, with other fresh material in these three volumes, while they add new facts and throw new light on the character of La Salle, confirm nearly every statement made in the first edition of the *Discovery of the Great West*. The only exception of consequence relates to the causes of La Salle's failure to find the mouth of the Mississippi in 1684, and to the conduct, on that occasion, of the naval commander, Beaujeu.

This edition is revised throughout, and in part rewritten with large additions. A map of the country traversed by the explorers is also added. The name of La Salle is placed on the titlepage,

as seems to be demanded by his increased prominence in the narrative of which he is the central figure.

Boston, 10 December, 1878.

---

NOTE.—The title of M. Margry's printed collection is "Découvertes et Établissements des Français dans l'Ouest et dans le Sud de l'Amérique Septentrionale (1614–1754), Mémoires et Documents originaux." I., II., III. Besides the three volumes relating to La Salle, there will be two others, relating to other explorers. In accordance with the agreement with Congress, an independent edition will appear in France, with an introduction setting forth the circumstances of the publication.

(87)

## Chapter XV

of George now stands; made two rude sledges  
placed the canvas & baggage upon them,  
and, tiring knee-deep <sup>in</sup> ~~the~~ saturated  
snow, dragged them from leagues through  
the woods, till they reached a point where  
the <sup>motion</sup> ~~movement~~ of the current kept the  
water hardly ~~free from~~ ice open. They were



Hardihood of La Salle

The winter journey; - The deserted Town; - Starved  
 Look; - Lake Michigan; - The wilderness; - Poor Parties; -  
 La Salle's Men give out; - ~~they are~~ Ill tidings; - Mutiny;  
~~a sharp chastisement of the Mutineers~~

The winter had been a <sup>severe</sup> hard one. When  
 La Salle & his <sup>five</sup> ~~four~~ companions reached ~~Lake~~  
 Peoria Lake, they found it ~~shut~~ <sup>shut</sup> with ice  
 from shore to shore with ice ~~that~~ that  
 stopped the progress of their canoes but  
 was too <sup>thin</sup> thin to bear the weight of a  
 man. They dragged their <sup>light</sup> ~~canoes~~ <sup>rafts</sup> up the  
 bank and into the forest, where the city  
 of Peoria now stands; made two rude sledges,  
 placed the canoes & baggage upon them,  
 and, toiling knee-deep <sup>in</sup> ~~through~~ <sup>the</sup> saturated  
 snow, dragged them four leagues through  
 the woods, till they reached a point where  
 the <sup>motion</sup> ~~movement~~ of the current kept the  
 water ~~partially~~ <sup>partially</sup> ~~from~~ <sup>from</sup> ~~being~~ <sup>being</sup> open. They were

1680

The Winter Journey

280

now on the river above the lake. Masses of drift ice, wedged together, but full of crevices & holes soon barred the way again, and <sup>carrying</sup> ~~leaving~~ their canoes ashore, they dragged them two leagues over a frozen marsh. Rain fell in <sup>floods</sup> ~~torrents~~, and when night came, they crouched for shelter in a ~~dark~~ deserted Indian hut.

In the morning, the third of March, they dragged their canoes half a league farther; then launched them, and, breaking the ice with clubs and battoles, forced their way slowly up the stream. Again their ~~way~~ <sup>progress</sup> was barred and again they took to the woods, triling onward till a tempest of moist half liquid snow found them a bivouac for the night. ~~Darkness came, and~~ <sup>followed, and in the morning</sup> ~~with it~~ a sharp frost <sup>told</sup> the white waste around them was glazed with

their ~~traps~~ <sup>movings</sup> were barred and again they took  
to the woods, trailing onward till a tempest-  
of moist-haly liquid snow forced them to  
bivouac for the night. ~~Drizzling came, and~~  
~~with it a sharp frost-~~ <sup>followed, and in the morning</sup> ~~till the white~~  
waste around them was glazed with

## PREFACE OF THE FIRST EDITION.

---

THE discovery of the "Great West," or the valleys of the Mississippi and the Lakes, is a portion of our history hitherto very obscure. Those magnificent regions were revealed to the world through a series of daring enterprises, of which the motives and even the incidents have been but partially and superficially known. The chief actor in them wrote much, but printed nothing; and the published writings of his associates stand woefully in need of interpretation from the unpublished documents which exist, but which have not heretofore been used as material for history.

This volume attempts to supply the defect. Of the large amount of wholly new material employed in it, by far the greater part is drawn from the various public archives of France, and the rest from private sources. The discovery of many of these documents is due to the indefatigable research of M. Pierre Margry, assistant

director of the Archives of the Marine and Colonies at Paris, whose labors as an investigator of the maritime and colonial history of France can be appreciated only by those who have seen their results. In the department of American colonial history, these results have been invaluable ; for, besides several private collections made by him, he rendered important service in the collection of the French portion of the Brodhead documents, selected and arranged the two great series of colonial papers ordered by the Canadian government, and prepared with vast labor analytical indexes of these and of supplementary documents in the French archives, as well as a copious index of the mass of papers relating to Louisiana. It is to be hoped that the valuable publications on the maritime history of France which have appeared from his pen are an earnest of more extended contributions in future.

The late President Sparks, some time after the publication of his *Life of La Salle*, caused a collection to be made of documents relating to that explorer, with the intention of incorporating them in a future edition. This intention was never carried into effect, and the documents were never used. With the liberality which always distinguished him, he placed them at my

disposal, and this privilege has been kindly continued by Mrs. Sparks.

Abbé Faillon, the learned author of "*La Colonie Française en Canada*," has sent me copies of various documents found by him, including family papers of La Salle. Among others who in various ways have aided my inquiries are Dr. John Paul, of Ottawa, Ill.; Count Adolphe de Circourt, and M. Jules Marcou, of Paris; M. A. Gérin Lajoie, Assistant Librarian of the Canadian Parliament; M. J. M. Le Moine, of Quebec; General Dix, Minister of the United States at the Court of France; O. H. Marshall, of Buffalo; J. G. Shea, of New York; Buckingham Smith, of St. Augustine; and Colonel Thomas Aspinwall, of Boston.

The smaller map contained in the book is a portion of the manuscript map of Franquelin, of which an account will be found in the Appendix.

The next volume of the series will be devoted to the efforts of Monarchy and Feudalism under Louis XIV. to establish a permanent power on this continent, and to the stormy career of Louis de Buade, Count of Frontenac.

Boston, 16 September, 1869.





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COVERY OF THE GREAT WEST" . . . . . *Page x*  
The only one of Mr. Parkman's books in his own handwriting, the  
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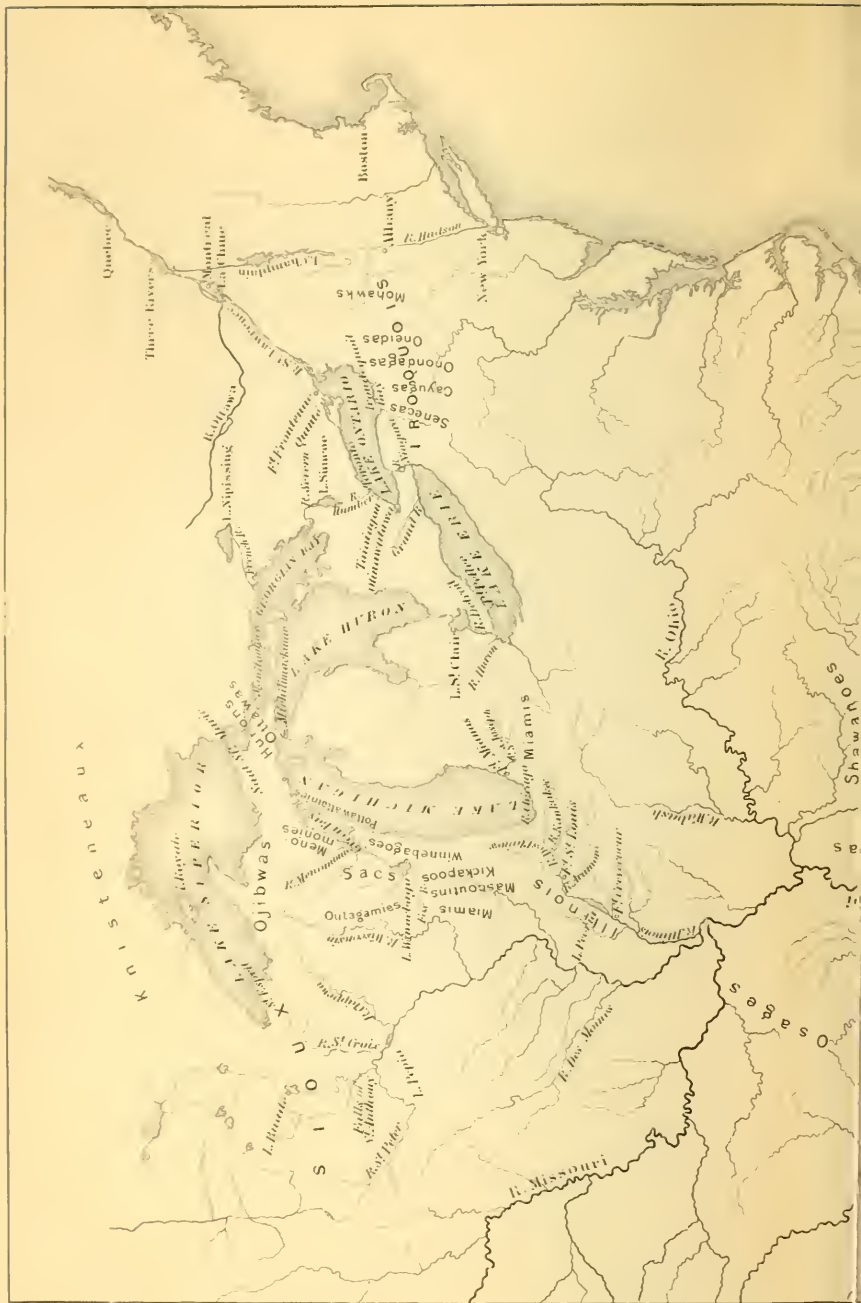


LA SALLE  
AND THE  
DISCOVERY OF THE GREAT WEST.









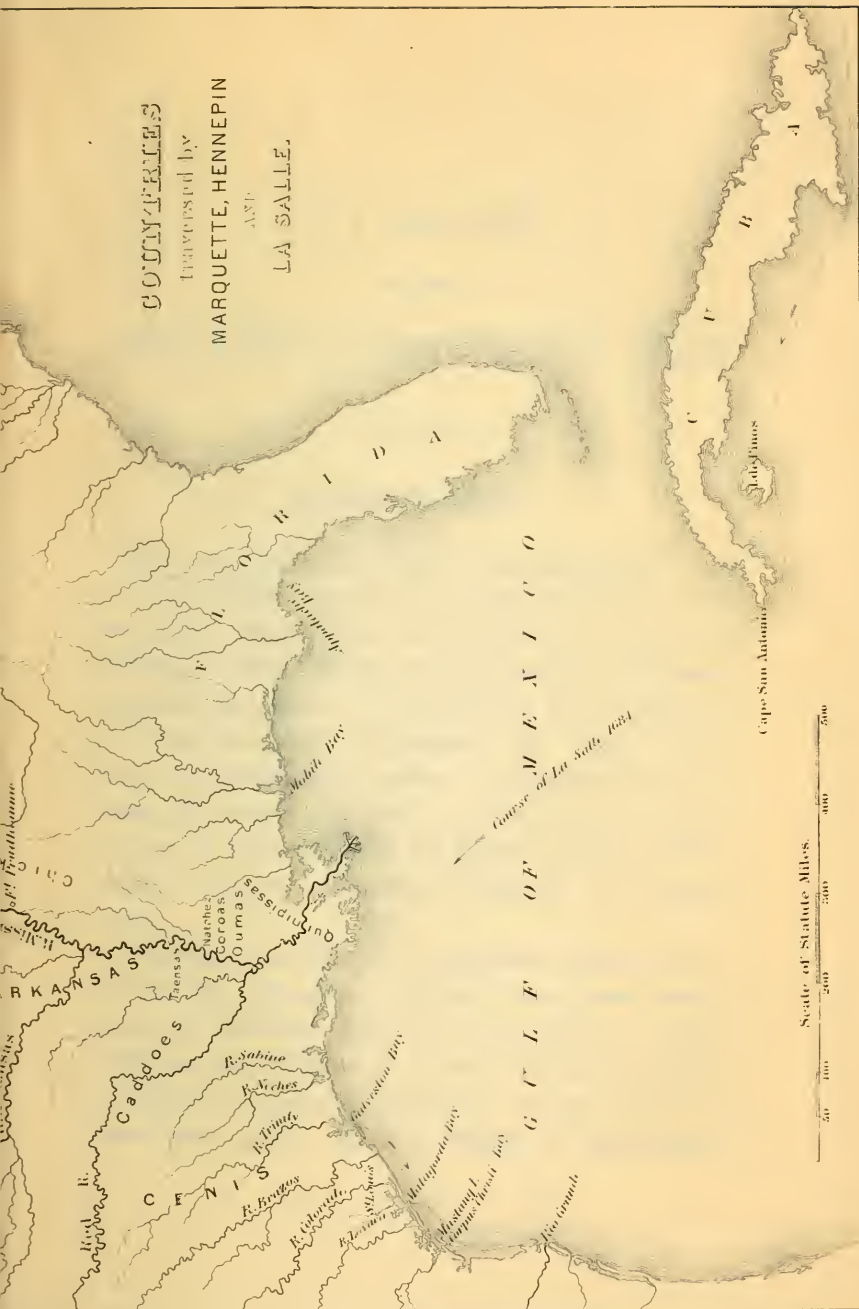
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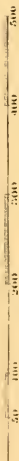
MARQUETTE, HENNEPIN

AND

LA SALLE.



Scale of Statute Miles.





LA SALLE  
AND THE  
DISCOVERY OF THE GREAT WEST.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE Spaniards discovered the Mississippi. De Soto was buried beneath its waters; and it was down its muddy current that his followers fled from the Eldorado of their dreams, transformed to a wilderness of misery and death. The discovery was never used, and was well-nigh forgotten. On early Spanish maps, the Mississippi is often indistinguishable from other affluents of the Gulf. A century passed after De Soto's journeyings in the South, before a French explorer reached a northern tributary of the great river.

This was Jean Nicollet, interpreter at Three Rivers on the St. Lawrence. He had been some twenty years in Canada, had lived among the savage Algonquins of Allumette Island, and spent eight or nine years among the Nipissings, on the lake which bears their name. Here he became an Indian in all

his habits, but remained, nevertheless, a zealous Catholic, and returned to civilization at last because he could not live without the sacraments. Strange stories were current among the Nipissings of a people without hair or beard, who came from the West to trade with a tribe beyond the Great Lakes. Who could doubt that these strangers were Chinese or Japanese? Such tales may well have excited Nicollet's curiosity; and when, in 1635, or possibly in 1638, he was sent as an ambassador to the tribe in question, he would not have been surprised if on arriving he had found a party of mandarins among them. Perhaps it was with a view to such a contingency that he provided himself, as a dress of ceremony, with a robe of Chinese damask embroidered with birds and flowers. The tribe to which he was sent was that of the Winnebagoes, living near the head of the Green Bay of Lake Michigan. They had come to blows with the Hurons, allies of the French; and Nicollet was charged to negotiate a peace. When he approached the Winnebago town, he sent one of his Indian attendants to announce his coming, put on his robe of damask, and advanced to meet the expectant crowd with a pistol in each hand. The squaws and children fled, screaming that it was a manito, or spirit, armed with thunder and lightning; but the chiefs and warriors regaled him with so bountiful a hospitality that a hundred and twenty beavers were devoured at a single feast. From the Winnebagoes, he passed westward, ascended Fox

River, crossed to the Wisconsin, and descended it so far that, as he reported on his return, in three days more he would have reached the sea. The truth seems to be that he mistook the meaning of his Indian guides, and that the "great water" to which he was so near was not the sea, but the Mississippi.

It has been affirmed that one Colonel Wood, of Virginia, reached a branch of the Mississippi as early as the year 1654, and that about 1670 a certain Captain Bolton penetrated to the river itself. Neither statement is sustained by sufficient evidence. It is further affirmed that, in 1678, a party from New England crossed the Mississippi, reached New Mexico, and, returning, reported their discoveries to the authorities of Boston, — a story without proof or probability. Meanwhile, French Jesuits and fur-traders pushed deeper and deeper into the wilderness of the northern lakes. In 1641, Jogues and Raymbault preached the Faith to a concourse of Indians at the outlet of Lake Superior. Then came the havoc and desolation of the Iroquois war, and for years farther exploration was arrested. In 1658-59 Pierre Esprit Radisson, a Frenchman of St. Malo, and his brother-in-law, Médard Chouart des Groseilliers, penetrated the regions beyond Lake Superior, and roamed westward till, as Radisson declares, they reached what was called the Forked River, "because it has two branches, the one towards the west, the other towards the south, which, we believe, runs towards Mexico," — which seems to point to the

Mississippi and its great confluent the Missouri. Two years later, the aged Jesuit Ménard attempted to plant a mission on the southern shore of Lake Superior, but perished in the forest by famine or the tomahawk. Allouez succeeded him, explored a part of Lake Superior, and heard, in his turn, of the Sioux and their great river the "Messipi." More and more, the thoughts of the Jesuits — and not of the Jesuits alone — dwelt on this mysterious stream. Through what regions did it flow; and whither would it lead them, — to the South Sea or the "Sea of Virginia;" to Mexico, Japan, or China? The problem was soon to be solved, and the mystery revealed.



## CHAPTER I.

1643-1669.

### CAVELIER DE LA SALLE.

THE YOUTH OF LA SALLE: HIS CONNECTION WITH THE JESUITS; HE GOES TO CANADA; HIS CHARACTER; HIS SCHEMES; HIS SEIGNIORY AT LA CHINE; HIS EXPEDITION IN SEARCH OF A WESTERN PASSAGE TO INDIA.

AMONG the burghers of Rouen was the old and rich family of the Cavaliers. Though citizens and not nobles, some of their connections held high diplomatic posts and honorable employments at Court. They were destined to find a better claim to distinction. In 1643 was born at Rouen Robert Cavelier, better known by the designation of La Salle.<sup>1</sup> His father Jean and his uncle Henri were wealthy mer-

<sup>1</sup> The following is the *acte de naissance*, discovered by Margry in the *registres de l'état civil*, Paroisse St. Herbland, Rouen: "Le vingt-deuxième jour de novembre, 1643, a été baptisé Robert Cavelier, fils de honorable homme Jean Cavelier et de Catherine Geest; ses parrain et marraine honorables personnes Nicolas Geest et Marguerite Morice."

La Salle's name in full was René-Robert Cavelier, Sieur de la Salle. La Salle was the name of an estate near Rouen, belonging to the Cavaliers. The wealthy French burghers often distinguished the various members of their families by designations borrowed from landed estates. Thus, François Marie Arouet, son of an ex-notary, received the name of Voltaire, which he made famous.

chants, living more like nobles than like burghers; and the boy received an education answering to the marked traits of intellect and character which he soon began to display. He showed an inclination for the exact sciences, and especially for the mathematics, in which he made great proficiency. At an early age, it is said, he became connected with the Jesuits; and, though doubt has been expressed of the statement, it is probably true.<sup>1</sup>

La Salle was always an earnest Catholic; and yet, judging by the qualities which his after-life evinced, he was not very liable to religious enthusiasm. It is nevertheless clear that the Society of Jesus may have had a powerful attraction for his youthful imagination. This great organization, so complicated yet so harmonious, a mighty machine moved from the centre by a single hand, was an image of regulated power, full of fascination for a mind like his. But if it was likely that he would be drawn into it, it was no less likely that he would soon wish to escape. To find

<sup>1</sup> Margry, after investigations at Rouen, is satisfied of its truth. (*Journal Général de l'Instruction Publique*, xxxi. 571.) Family papers of the Caveliers, examined by the Abbé Faillon, and copies of some of which he has sent to me, lead to the same conclusion. We shall find several allusions hereafter to La Salle's having in his youth taught in a school, which, in his position, could only have been in connection with some religious community. The doubts alluded to have proceeded from the failure of Father Felix Martin, S. J., to find the name of La Salle on the list of novices. If he had looked for the name of Robert Cavelier, he would probably have found it. The companion of La Salle, Hennepin, is very explicit with regard to this connection with the Jesuits, a point on which he had no motive for falsehood.

himself not at the centre of power, but at the circumference; not the mover, but the moved; the passive instrument of another's will, taught to walk in prescribed paths, to renounce his individuality and become a component atom of a vast whole, — would have been intolerable to him. Nature had shaped him for other uses than to teach a class of boys on the benches of a Jesuit school. Nor, on his part, was he likely to please his directors; for, self-controlled and self-contained as he was, he was far too intractable a subject to serve their turn. A youth whose calm exterior hid an inexhaustible fund of pride; whose inflexible purposes, nursed in secret, the confessional and the "manifestation of conscience" could hardly drag to the light; whose strong personality would not yield to the shaping hand; and who, by a necessity of his nature, could obey no initiative but his own, — was not after the model that Loyola had commended to his followers.

La Salle left the Jesuits, parting with them, it is said, on good terms, and with a reputation of excellent acquirements and unimpeachable morals. This last is very credible. The cravings of a deep ambition, the hunger of an insatiable intellect, the intense longing for action and achievement, subdued in him all other passions; and in his faults the love of pleasure had no part. He had an elder brother in Canada, the Abbé Jean Cavelier, a priest of St. Sulpice. Apparently, it was this that shaped his destinies. His connection with the Jesuits had deprived him,

under the French law, of the inheritance of his father, who had died not long before. An allowance was made to him of three or (as is elsewhere stated) four hundred livres a year, the capital of which was paid over to him; and with this pittance he sailed for Canada, to seek his fortune, in the spring of 1666.<sup>1</sup>

Next, we find him at Montreal. In another volume, we have seen how an association of enthusiastic devotees had made a settlement at this place.<sup>2</sup> Having in some measure accomplished its work, it was now dissolved; and the corporation of priests, styled the Seminary of St. Sulpice, which had taken a prominent part in the enterprise, and, indeed, had been created with a view to it, was now the proprietor and the feudal lord of Montreal. It was destined to retain its seignorial rights until the abolition of the feudal tenures of Canada in our own day, and it still holds vast possessions in the city and island. These worthy ecclesiastics, models of a discreet and sober conservatism, were holding a post with which a band of veteran soldiers or warlike frontiersmen would have been better matched. Montreal was perhaps the most dangerous place in Canada. In time

<sup>1</sup> It does not appear what vows La Salle had taken. By a recent ordinance (1666), persons entering religious orders could not take the final vows before the age of twenty-five. By the family papers above mentioned, it appears, however, that he had brought himself under the operation of the law, which debarred those who, having entered religious orders, afterwards withdrew, from claiming the inheritance of relatives who had died after their entrance.

<sup>2</sup> The Jesuits in North America, ii. chap. i.

of war, which might have been called the normal condition of the colony, it was exposed by its position to incessant inroads of the Iroquois, or Five Nations, of New York; and no man could venture into the forests or the fields without bearing his life in his hand. The savage confederates had just received a sharp chastisement at the hands of Courcelle, the governor; and the result was a treaty of peace which might at any moment be broken, but which was an inexpressible relief while it lasted.

The priests of St. Sulpice were granting out their lands, on very easy terms, to settlers. They wished to extend a thin line of settlements along the front of their island, to form a sort of outpost, from which an alarm could be given on any descent of the Iroquois. La Salle was the man for such a purpose. Had the priests understood him, — which they evidently did not, for some of them suspected him of levity, the last foible with which he could be charged, — had they understood him, they would have seen in him a young man in whom the fire of youth glowed not the less ardently for the veil of reserve that covered it; who would shrink from no danger, but would not court it in bravado; and who would cling with an invincible tenacity of gripe to any purpose which he might espouse. There is good reason to think that he had come to Canada with purposes already conceived, and that he was ready to avail himself of any stepping-stone which might help to realize them. Queylus, Superior of the Seminary, made him a

generous offer; and he accepted it. This was the gratuitous grant of a large tract of land at the place now called La Chine, above the great rapids of the same name, and eight or nine miles from Montreal. On one hand, the place was greatly exposed to attack; and, on the other, it was favorably situated for the fur-trade. La Salle and his successors became its feudal proprietors, on the sole condition of delivering to the Seminary, on every change of ownership, a medal of fine silver, weighing one mark.<sup>1</sup> He entered on the improvement of his new domain with what means he could command, and began to grant out his land to such settlers as would join him.

Approaching the shore where the city of Montreal now stands, one would have seen a row of small compact dwellings, extending along a narrow street, parallel to the river, and then, as now, called St. Paul Street. On a hill at the right stood the wind-mill of the seigniors, built of stone, and pierced with loopholes to serve, in time of need, as a place of defence. On the left, in an angle formed by the junction of a rivulet with the St. Lawrence, was a square bastioned fort of stone. Here lived the military governor, appointed by the Seminary, and commanding a few soldiers of the regiment of Carignan. In front, on the line of the street, were the enclosure and buildings of the Seminary, and,

<sup>1</sup> *Transport de la Seigneurie de St. Sulpice*, cited by Faillon. La Salle called his new domain as above. Two or three years later, it received the name of La Chine, for a reason which will appear.

nearly adjoining them, those of the Hôtel-Dieu, or Hospital, both provided for defence in case of an Indian attack. In the hospital enclosure was a small church, opening on the street, and, in the absence of any other, serving for the whole settlement.<sup>1</sup>

Landing, passing the fort, and walking southward along the shore, one would soon have left the rough clearings, and entered the primeval forest. Here, mile after mile, he would have journeyed on in solitude, when the hoarse roar of the rapids, foaming in fury on his left, would have reached his listening ear; and at length, after a walk of some three hours, he would have found the rude beginnings of a settlement. It was where the St. Lawrence widens into the broad expanse called the Lake of St. Louis. Here, La Salle had traced out the circuit of a palisaded village, and assigned to each settler half an arpent, or about the third of an acre, within the enclosure, for which he was to render to the young seignior a yearly acknowledgment of three capons, besides six deniers — that is, half a sou — in money. To each was assigned, moreover, sixty arpents of land beyond the limits of the village, with the perpetual rent of half a sou for each arpent. He also set apart a common, two hundred arpents in extent, for the use of the settlers, on condition of the pay-

<sup>1</sup> A detailed plan of Montreal at this time is preserved in the Archives de l'Empire, and has been reproduced by Faillon. There is another, a few years later, and still more minute, of which a facsimile will be found in the Library of the Canadian Parliament.



ment by each of five sous a year. He reserved four hundred and twenty arpents for his own personal domain, and on this he began to clear the ground and erect buildings. Similar to this were the beginnings of all the Canadian seigniories formed at this troubled period.<sup>1</sup>

That La Salle came to Canada with objects distinctly in view, is probable from the fact that he at once began to study the Indian languages, — and with such success that he is said, within two or three years, to have mastered the Iroquois and seven or eight other languages and dialects.<sup>2</sup> From the shore of his seignior, he could gaze westward over the broad breast of the Lake of St. Louis, bounded by the dim forests of Chateauguay and Beauharnois; but his thoughts flew far beyond, across the wild and lonely world that stretched towards the sunset. Like Champlain, and all the early explorers, he dreamed of a passage to the South Sea, and a new road for commerce to the riches of China and Japan. Indians often came to his secluded settlement; and, on one occasion, he was visited by a band of the Seneca Iroquois, not long before the scourge of the colony, but now, in virtue of the treaty, wearing the sem-

<sup>1</sup> The above particulars have been unearthed by the indefatigable Abbé Faillon. Some of La Salle's grants are still preserved in the ancient records of Montreal.

<sup>2</sup> *Papiers de Famille*. He is said to have made several journeys into the forests, towards the North, in the years 1667 and 1668, and to have satisfied himself that little could be hoped from explorations in that direction.



blance of friendship. The visitors spent the winter with him, and told him of a river called the Ohio, rising in their country, and flowing into the sea, but at such a distance that its mouth could only be reached after a journey of eight or nine months. Evidently, the Ohio and the Mississippi are here merged into one.<sup>1</sup> In accordance with geographical views then prevalent, he conceived that this great river must needs flow into the "Vermilion Sea;" that is, the Gulf of California. If so, it would give him what he sought, a western passage to China; while, in any case, the populous Indian tribes said to inhabit its banks might be made a source of great commercial profit.

La Salle's imagination took fire. His resolution was soon formed; and he descended the St. Lawrence to Quebec, to gain the countenance of the governor for his intended exploration. Few men were more skilled than he in the art of clear and plausible statement. Both the governor Courcelle and the intendant Talon were readily won over to his plan; for which, however, they seem to have given him no more substantial aid than that of the governor's letters patent authorizing the enterprise.<sup>2</sup> The cost was to be his own; and he had no money, having spent it all on his seigniory. He therefore proposed that the Semi-

<sup>1</sup> According to Dollier de Casson, who had good opportunities of knowing, the Iroquois always called the Mississippi the Ohio, while the Algonquins gave it its present name.

<sup>2</sup> *Patoulet à Colbert*, 11 Nov., 1669.

nary, which had given it to him, should buy it back again, with such improvements as he had made. Queylus, the Superior, being favorably disposed towards him, consented, and bought of him the greater part; while La Salle sold the remainder, including the clearings, to one Jean Milot, an iron-monger, for twenty-eight hundred livres.<sup>1</sup> With this he bought four canoes, with the necessary supplies, and hired fourteen men.

Meanwhile, the Seminary itself was preparing a similar enterprise. The Jesuits at this time not only held an ascendancy over the other ecclesiastics in Canada, but exercised an inordinate influence on the civil government. The Seminary priests of Montreal were jealous of these powerful rivals, and eager to emulate their zeal in the saving of souls and the conquering of new domains for the Faith. Under this impulse, they had, three years before, established a mission at Quinté, on the north shore of Lake Ontario, in charge of two of their number, one of whom was the Abbé Fénelon, elder brother of the celebrated Archbishop of Cambray. Another of them, Dollier de Casson, had spent the winter in a hunting-camp of the Nipissings, where an Indian prisoner, captured in the Northwest, told him of populous tribes of that quarter living in heathenish darkness. On this, the Seminary priests resolved to essay their conversion; and an expedition, to be directed by Dollier, was fitted out to this end.

<sup>1</sup> *Cession de la Seigneurie; Contrat de Vente* (Margry, i. 103, 104).

He was not ill suited to the purpose. He had been a soldier in his youth, and had fought valiantly as an officer of cavalry under Turenne. He was a man of great courage; of a tall, commanding person; and of uncommon bodily strength, which he had notably proved in the campaign of Courcelle against the Iroquois, three years before.<sup>1</sup> On going to Quebec to procure the necessary outfit, he was urged by Courcelle to modify his plans so far as to act in concert with La Salle in exploring the mystery of the great unknown river of the West. Dollier and his brother priests consented. One of them, Galinée, was joined with him as a colleague, because he was skilled in surveying, and could make a map of their route. Three canoes were procured, and seven hired men completed the party. It was determined that La Salle's expedition and that of the Seminary should be combined in one, — an arrangement ill suited to the character of the young explorer, who was unfit for any enterprise of which he was not the undisputed chief.

Midsummer was near, and there was no time to lose. Yet the moment was most unpropitious, for a Seneca chief had lately been murdered by three scoundrel soldiers of the fort of Montreal; and, while they were undergoing their trial, it became known

<sup>1</sup> He was the author of the very curious and valuable *Histoire de Montréal*, preserved in the Bibliothèque Mazarine, of which a copy is in my possession. The Historical Society of Montreal has recently resolved to print it.

that three other Frenchmen had treacherously put to death several Iroquois of the Oneida tribe, in order to get possession of their furs. The whole colony trembled in expectation of a new outbreak of the war. Happily, the event proved otherwise. The authors of the last murder escaped; but the three soldiers were shot at Montreal, in presence of a considerable number of the Iroquois, who declared themselves satisfied with the atonement; and on this same day, the sixth of July, the adventurers began their voyage.

## CHAPTER II.

1669-1671.

### LA SALLE AND THE SULPITIANS.

THE FRENCH IN WESTERN NEW YORK. — LOUIS JOLIET. — THE SULPITIANS ON LAKE ERIE; AT DETROIT; AT SAUT STE. MARIE. — THE MYSTERY OF LA SALLE: HE DISCOVERS THE OHIO; HE DESCENDS THE ILLINOIS; DID HE REACH THE MISSISSIPPI?

LA CHINE was the starting-point; and the combined parties, in all twenty-four men with seven canoes, embarked on the Lake of St. Louis. With them were two other canoes, bearing the party of Senecas who had wintered at La Salle's settlement, and who were now to act as guides. Father Galinée recounts the journey. He was no woodsman: the river, the forests, the rapids, were all new to him, and he dilates on them with the minuteness of a novice. Above all, he admired the Indian birch canoes. "If God," he says, "grants me the grace of returning to France, I shall try to carry one with me." Then he describes the bivouac: "Your lodging is as extraordinary as your vessels; for, after paddling or carrying the canoes all day, you find mother earth ready to receive your wearied body. If the weather is fair, you make a fire and lie down

to sleep without further trouble; but if it rains, you must peel bark from the trees, and make a shed by laying it on a frame of sticks. As for your food, it is enough to make you burn all the cookery books that ever were written; for in the woods of Canada one finds means to live well without bread, wine, salt, pepper, or spice. The ordinary food is Indian corn, or Turkey wheat as they call it in France, which is crushed between two stones and boiled, seasoning it with meat or fish, when you can get them. This sort of life seemed so strange to us that we all felt the effects of it; and before we were a hundred leagues from Montreal, not one of us was free from some malady or other. At last, after all our misery, on the second of August, we discovered Lake Ontario, like a great sea with no land beyond it."

Thirty-five days after leaving La Chine, they reached Irondequoit Bay, on the south side of the lake. Here they were met by a number of Seneca Indians, who professed friendship and invited them to their villages, fifteen or twenty miles distant. As this was on their way to the upper waters of the Ohio, and as they hoped to find guides at the villages to conduct them, they accepted the invitation. Dollier, with most of the men, remained to guard the canoes; while La Salle, with Galinée and eight other Frenchmen, accompanied by a troop of Indians, set out on the morning of the twelfth, and reached the principal village before evening. It stood on a

hill, in the midst of a clearing nearly two leagues in compass.<sup>1</sup> A rude stockade surrounded it; and as the visitors drew near they saw a band of old men seated on the grass, waiting to receive them. One of these veterans, so feeble with age that he could hardly stand, made them an harangue, in which he declared that the Senecas were their brothers, and invited them to enter the village. They did so, surrounded by a crowd of savages, and presently found themselves in the midst of a disorderly cluster of large but filthy abodes of bark, about a hundred and fifty in number, the most capacious of which was assigned to their use. Here they made their quarters, and were soon overwhelmed by Seneca hospitality. Children brought them pumpkins and berries from the woods; and boy messengers came to summon them to endless feasts, where they were regaled with the flesh of dogs and with boiled maize seasoned with oil pressed from nuts and the seed of sunflowers.

La Salle had flattered himself that he knew enough Iroquois to hold communication with the Senecas; but he failed completely in the attempt. The priests had a Dutch interpreter, who spoke Iroquois fluently, but knew so little French, and was withal so obstinate, that he proved useless; so that it was necessary to employ a man in the service of the Jesuit Fremin, whose mission was at this village. What the party needed was a guide to conduct them to the Ohio; and

<sup>1</sup> This village seems to have been that attacked by Denonville in 1687. It stood on Boughton Hill, near the present town of Victor.



soon after their arrival a party of warriors appeared, with a young prisoner belonging to one of the tribes of that region. Galinée wanted to beg or buy him from his captors; but the Senecas had other intentions. "I saw," writes the priest, "the most miserable spectacle I ever beheld in my life." It was the prisoner tied to a stake and tortured for six hours with diabolical ingenuity, while the crowd danced and yelled with delight, and the chiefs and elders sat in a row smoking their pipes and watching the contortions of the victim with an air of serene enjoyment. The body was at last cut up and eaten, and in the evening the whole population occupied themselves in scaring away the angry ghost by beating with sticks against the bark sides of the lodges.

La Salle and his companions began to fear for their own safety. Some of their hosts wished to kill them in revenge for the chief murdered near Montreal; and as these and others were at times in a frenzy of drunkenness, the position of the French became critical. They suspected that means had been used to prejudice the Senecas against them. Not only could they get no guides, but they were told that if they went to the Ohio the tribes of those parts would infallibly kill them. Their Dutch interpreter became disheartened and unmanageable, and, after staying a month at the village, the hope of getting farther on their way seemed less than ever. Their plan, it was clear, must be changed; and an Indian from Otinawatawa, a kind of Iroquois colony at the head



of Lake Ontario, offered to guide them to his village and show them a better way to the Ohio. They left the Senecas, coasted the south shore of the lake, passed the mouth of the Niagara, where they heard the distant roar of the cataract, and on the twenty-fourth of September reached Otinawatawa, which was a few miles north of the present town of Hamilton. The inhabitants proved friendly, and La Salle received the welcome present of a Shawanoe prisoner, who told them that the Ohio could be reached in six weeks, and that he would guide them to it. Delighted at this good fortune, they were about to set out; when they heard, to their astonishment, of the arrival of two other Frenchmen at a neighboring village.

One of the strangers was destined to hold a conspicuous place in the history of western discovery. This was Louis Joliet, a young man of about the age of La Salle. Like him, he had studied for the priesthood; but the world and the wilderness had conquered his early inclinations, and changed him to an active and adventurous fur-trader. Talon had sent him to discover and explore the copper-mines of Lake Superior. He had failed in the attempt, and was now returning. His Indian guide, afraid of passing the Niagara portage lest he should meet enemies, had led him from Lake Erie, by way of Grand River, towards the head of Lake Ontario; and thus it was that he met La Salle and the Sulpitians.

This meeting caused a change of plan. Joliet showed the priests a map which he had made of such parts of the Upper Lakes as he had visited, and gave them a copy of it; telling them, at the same time, of the Pottawattamies and other tribes of that region in grievous need of spiritual succor. The result was a determination on their part to follow the route which he suggested, notwithstanding the remonstrances of La Salle, who in vain reminded them that the Jesuits had preoccupied the field, and would regard them as intruders. They resolved that the Pottawattamies should no longer sit in darkness; while, as for the Mississippi, it could be reached, as they conceived, with less risk by this northern route than by that of the south.

La Salle was of a different mind. His goal was the Ohio, and not the northern lakes. A few days before, while hunting, he had been attacked by a fever, sarcastically ascribed by Galinée to his having seen three large rattlesnakes crawling up a rock. He now told his two colleagues that he was in no condition to go forward, and should be forced to part with them. The staple of La Salle's character, as his life will attest, was an invincible determination of purpose, which set at naught all risks and all sufferings. He had cast himself with all his resources into this enterprise; and, while his faculties remained, he was not a man to recoil from it. On the other hand, the masculine fibre of which he was made did not always withhold him from the practice of the arts of address,

and the use of what Dollier de Casson styles *belles paroles*. He respected the priesthood, with the exception, it seems, of the Jesuits; and he was under obligations to the Sulpitians of Montreal. Hence there can be no doubt that he used his illness as a pretext for escaping from their company without ungraciousness, and following his own path in his own way.

On the last day of September, the priests made an altar, supported by the paddles of the canoes laid on forked sticks. Dollier said mass; La Salle and his followers received the sacrament, as did also those of his late colleagues; and thus they parted, the Sulpitians and their party descending the Grand River towards Lake Erie, while La Salle, as they supposed, began his return to Montreal. What course he actually took we shall soon inquire; and meanwhile, for a few moments, we will follow the priests. When they reached Lake Erie, they saw it tossing like an angry ocean. They had no mind to tempt the dangerous and unknown navigation, and encamped for the winter in the forest near the peninsula called the Long Point. Here they gathered a good store of chestnuts, hickory-nuts, plums, and grapes, and built themselves a log cabin, with a recess at the end for an altar. They passed the winter unmolested, shooting game in abundance, and saying mass three times a week. Early in spring, they planted a large cross, attached to it the arms of France, and took formal possession of the country in

the name of Louis XIV. This done, they resumed their voyage, and, after many troubles, landed one evening in a state of exhaustion on or near Point Pelée, towards the western extremity of Lake Erie. A storm rose as they lay asleep, and swept off a great part of their baggage, which, in their fatigue, they had left at the edge of the water. Their altar-service was lost with the rest, — a misfortune which they ascribed to the jealousy and malice of the Devil. Debarred henceforth from saying mass, they resolved to return to Montreal and leave the Pottawattamies uninstructed. They presently entered the strait by which Lake Huron joins Lake Erie, and landing near where Detroit now stands, found a large stone, somewhat suggestive of the human figure, which the Indians had bedaubed with paint, and which they worshipped as a manito. In view of their late misfortune, this device of the arch-enemy excited their utmost resentment. "After the loss of our altar-service," writes Galinée, "and the hunger we had suffered, there was not a man of us who was not filled with hatred against this false deity. I devoted one of my axes to breaking him in pieces; and then, having fastened our canoes side by side, we carried the largest piece to the middle of the river, and threw it, with all the rest, into the water, that he might never be heard of again. God rewarded us immediately for this good action, for we killed a deer and a bear that same day."

This is the first recorded passage of white men

through the Strait of Detroit; though Joliet had, no doubt, passed this way on his return from the Upper Lakes.<sup>1</sup> The two missionaries took this course, with the intention of proceeding to the Saut Ste. Marie, and there joining the Ottawas, and other tribes of that region, in their yearly descent to Montreal. They issued upon Lake Huron; followed its eastern shores till they reached the Georgian Bay, near the head of which the Jesuits had established their great mission of the Hurons, destroyed, twenty years before, by the Iroquois;<sup>2</sup> and, ignoring or slighting the labors of the rival missionaries, held their way northward along the rocky archipelago that edged those lonely coasts. They passed the Manitoulines, and, ascending the strait by which Lake Superior discharges its waters, arrived on the twenty-fifth of May at Ste. Marie du Saut. Here they found the two Jesuits, Dablon and Marquette, in a square fort of cedar pickets, built by their men within the past year, and enclosing a chapel and a house. Near by, they had cleared a large tract of land, and sown it with wheat, Indian corn, peas, and other crops. The new-comers were graciously received, and invited to vespers in the chapel; but they very soon found La Salle's prediction made good, and saw that the Jesuit fathers wanted no help from St. Sulpice. Galinée,

<sup>1</sup> The Jesuits and fur-traders, on their way to the Upper Lakes, had followed the route of the Ottawa, or, more recently, that of Toronto and the Georgian Bay. Iroquois hostility had long closed the Niagara portage and Lake Erie against them.

<sup>2</sup> The Jesuits in North America.

on his part, takes occasion to remark, that, though the Jesuits had baptized a few Indians at the Saut, not one of them was a good enough Christian to receive the Eucharist; and he intimates that the case, by their own showing, was still worse at their mission of St. Esprit. The two Sulpitians did not care to prolong their stay; and, three days after their arrival, they left the Saut, — not, as they expected, with the Indians, but with a French guide, furnished by the Jesuits. Ascending French River to Lake Nipissing, they crossed to the waters of the Ottawa, and descended to Montreal, which they reached on the eighteenth of June. They had made no discoveries and no converts; but Galinée, after his arrival, made the earliest map of the Upper Lakes known to exist.<sup>1</sup>

We return now to La Salle, only to find ourselves involved in mist and obscurity. What did he do after he left the two priests? Unfortunately, a definite answer is not possible; and the next two years of his life remain in some measure an enigma. That he was busied in active exploration, and that he made important discoveries, is certain; but the extent and character of these discoveries remain wrapped in doubt. He is known to have kept journals and made maps; and these were in existence, and in possession of his niece, Madeleine Cavelier, then in advanced

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix. The above narrative is from *Récit de ce qui s'est passé de plus remarquable dans le Voyage de MM. Dollier et Galinée*. (Bibliothèque Nationale.)



age, as late as the year 1756; beyond which time the most diligent inquiry has failed to trace them. Abbé Faillon affirms that some of La Salle's men, refusing to follow him, returned to La Chine, and that the place then received its name, in derision of the young adventurer's dream of a westward passage to China.<sup>1</sup> As for himself, the only distinct record of his movements is that contained in a paper, entitled "*Histoire de Monsieur de la Salle.*" It is an account of his explorations, and of the state of parties in Canada previous to the year 1678, — taken from the lips of La Salle himself, by a person whose name does not appear, but who declares that he had ten or twelve conversations with him at Paris, whither he had come with a petition to the Court. The writer himself had never been in America, and was ignorant of its geography; hence blunders on his part might reasonably be expected. His statements, however, are in some measure intelligible; and the following is the substance of them.

After leaving the priests, La Salle went to Onondaga, where we are left to infer that he succeeded better in getting a guide than he had before done among the Senecas. Thence he made his way to a point six or seven leagues distant from Lake Erie, where he reached a branch of the Ohio, and, descending it, followed the river as far as the rapids at Louisville, — or, as has been maintained, beyond

<sup>1</sup> Dollier de Casson alludes to this as "*cette transmigration célèbre qui se fit de la Chine dans ces quartiers.*"

its confluence with the Mississippi. His men now refused to go farther, and abandoned him, escaping to the English and the Dutch; whereupon he retraced his steps alone.<sup>1</sup> This must have been in the winter of 1669-70, or in the following spring; unless there is an error of date in the statement of Nicolas Perrot, the famous *voyageur*, who says that he met him in the summer of 1670, hunting on the Ottawa with a party of Iroquois.<sup>2</sup>

But how was La Salle employed in the following year? The same memoir has its solution to the

<sup>1</sup> The following is the passage relating to this journey in the remarkable paper above mentioned. After recounting La Salle's visit with the Sulpitians to the Seneca village, and stating that the intrigues of the Jesuit missionary prevented them from obtaining a guide, it speaks of the separation of the travellers and the journey of Galinée and his party to the Sant Ste. Marie, where "les Jésuites les congédièrent." It then proceeds as follows: "Cependant Mr. de la Salle continua son chemin par une rivière qui va de l'est à l'ouest; et passe à Onontagué [*Onondaga*], puis à six ou sept lieues au-dessous du Lac Erié; et étant parvenu jusqu'au 280<sup>me</sup> ou 83<sup>me</sup> degré de longitude, et jusqu'au 41<sup>me</sup> degré de latitude, trouva un saut qui tombe vers l'ouest dans un pays bas, marescageux, tout couvert de vieilles souches, dont il y en a quelques-unes qui sont encore sur pied. Il fut donc contraint de prendre terre, et suivant une hauteur qui le pouvoit mener loin, il trouva quelques sauvages qui luy dirent que fort loin de là le mesme fleuve qui se perdoit dans cette terre basse et vaste se réunissoit en un lit. Il continua donc son chemin, mais comme la fatigue estoit grande, 23 ou 24 hommes qu'il avoit menez jusques là le quittèrent tous en une nuit, regagnèrent le fleuve, et se sauvèrent, les uns à la Nouvelle Hollande et les autres à la Nouvelle Angleterre. Il se vit donc seul à 400 lieues de chez luy, où il ne laisse pas de revenir, remontant la rivière et vivant de chasse, d'herbes, et de ce que luy donnèrent les sauvages qu'il rencontra en son chemin."

<sup>2</sup> Perrot, *Mémoires*, 119, 120.



problem. By this it appears that the indefatigable explorer embarked on Lake Erie, ascended the Detroit to Lake Huron, coasted the unknown shores of Michigan, passed the Straits of Michilimackinac, and, leaving Green Bay behind him, entered what is described as an incomparably larger bay, but which was evidently the southern portion of Lake Michigan. Thence he crossed to a river flowing westward, — evidently the Illinois, — and followed it until it was joined by another river flowing from the northwest to the southeast. By this, the Mississippi only can be meant; and he is reported to have said that he descended it to the thirty-sixth degree of latitude; where he stopped, assured that it discharged itself not into the Gulf of California, but into the Gulf of Mexico, and resolved to follow it thither at a future day, when better provided with men and supplies.<sup>1</sup>

The first of these statements, — that relating to the

<sup>1</sup> The memoir — after stating, as above, that he entered Lake Huron, doubled the peninsula of Michigan, and passed La Baye des Puants (*Green Bay*) — says: “ Il reconnut une baye incomparablement plus large; au fond de laquelle vers l’ouest il trouva un très-beau havre et au fond de ce havre un fleuve qui va de l’est à l’ouest. Il suivit ce fleuve, et étant parvenu jusqu’environ le 280<sup>me</sup> degré de longitude et le 39<sup>me</sup> de latitude, il trouva un autre fleuve qui se joignant au premier coulait du nordouest au sudest, et il suivit ce fleuve jusqu’au 36<sup>me</sup> degré de latitude.”

The “ très-beau havre ” may have been the entrance of the river Chicago, whence, by an easy portage, he might have reached the Des Plaines branch of the Illinois. We shall see that he took this course in his famous exploration of 1682.

The intendant Talon announces, in his despatches of this year, that he had sent La Salle southward and westward to explore.

Ohio, — confused, vague, and in great part incorrect, as it certainly is, is nevertheless well sustained as regards one essential point. La Salle himself, in a memorial addressed to Count Frontenac in 1677, affirms that he discovered the Ohio, and descended it as far as to a fall which obstructed it.<sup>1</sup> Again, his rival, Louis Joliet, whose testimony on this point cannot be suspected, made two maps of the region of the Mississippi and the Great Lakes. The Ohio is laid down on both of them, with an inscription to the effect that it had been explored by La Salle.<sup>2</sup> That

<sup>1</sup> The following are his words (he speaks of himself in the third person): “L’année 1667, et les suivantes, il fit divers voyages avec beaucoup de dépenses, dans lesquels il découvrit le premier beaucoup de pays au sud des grands lacs, et *entre autres la grande rivière d’Ohio*; il la suivit jusqu’à un endroit où elle tombe de fort haut dans de vastes marais, à la hauteur de 37 degrés, après avoir été grossie par une autre rivière fort large qui vient du nord; et toutes ces eaux se déchargent selon toutes les apparences dans le Golfe du Mexique.”

This “autre rivière,” which, it seems, was above the fall, may have been the Miami or the Scioto. There is but one fall on the river, that of Louisville, which is not so high as to deserve to be described as “fort haut,” being only a strong rapid. The latitude, as will be seen, is different in the two accounts, and incorrect in both.

<sup>2</sup> One of these maps is entitled *Carte de la découverte du Sieur Joliet*, 1674. Over the lines representing the Ohio are the words, “Route du sieur de la Salle pour aller dans le Mexique.” The other map of Joliet bears, also written over the Ohio, the words, “Rivière par où descendit le sieur de la Salle au sortir du lac Erié pour aller dans le Mexique.” I have also another manuscript map, made before the voyage of Joliet and Marquette, and apparently in the year 1673, on which the Ohio is represented as far as to a point a little below Louisville, and over it is written, “Rivière Ohio, ainsi appelée par les Iroquois à cause de sa beauté, par où le sieur

he discovered the Ohio may then be regarded as established. That he descended it to the Mississippi, he himself does not pretend; nor is there reason to believe that he did so.

With regard to his alleged voyage down the Illinois, the case is different. Here, he is reported to have made a statement which admits but one interpretation, — that of the discovery by him of the Mississippi prior to its discovery by Joliet and Marquette. This statement is attributed to a man not prone to vaunt his own exploits, who never proclaimed them in print, and whose testimony, even in his own case, must therefore have weight. But it comes to us through the medium of a person strongly biassed in favor of La Salle, and against Marquette and the Jesuits.

Seven years had passed since the alleged discovery, and La Salle had not before laid claim to it; although it was matter of notoriety that during five years it had been claimed by Joliet, and that his claim was generally admitted. The correspondence of the governor and the intendant is silent as to La Salle's having penetrated to the Mississippi, though the attempt was made under the auspices of the latter, as his own letters declare; while both had the discovery of the great river earnestly at heart. The governor, Frontenac, La Salle's ardent supporter and *de la Salle est descendu.*" The Mississippi is not represented on this map; but — and this is very significant, as indicating the extent of La Salle's exploration of the following year — a small part of the upper Illinois is laid down.

ally, believed in 1672, as his letters show, that the Mississippi flowed into the Gulf of California; and, two years later, he announces to the minister Colbert its discovery by Joliet.<sup>1</sup> After La Salle's death, his brother, his nephew, and his niece addressed a memorial to the king, petitioning for certain grants in consideration of the discoveries of their relative, which they specify at some length; but they do not pretend that he reached the Mississippi before his expeditions of 1679 to 1682.<sup>2</sup> This silence is the more significant, as it is this very niece who had possession of the papers in which La Salle recounts the journeys of which the issues are in question.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Lettre de Frontenac au Ministre*, 14 Nov., 1674. He here speaks of "la grande rivière qu'il [Joliet] a trouvée, qui va du nord au sud, et qui est aussi large que celle du Saint-Laurent vis-à-vis de Québec." Four years later, Frontenac speaks slightly of Joliet, but neither denies his discovery of the Mississippi, nor claims it for La Salle, in whose interest he writes.

<sup>2</sup> *Papiers de Famille; Mémoire présenté au Roi*. The following is an extract: "Il parvient . . . jusqu'à la rivière des Illinois. Il y construisit un fort situé à 350 lieues au-delà du fort de Frontenac, et suivant ensuite le cours de cette rivière, il trouva qu'elle se jettoit dans un grand fleuve appelé par ceux du pays Mississippi, c'est à dire *grande eau*, environ cent lieues au-dessous du fort qu'il venoit de construire." This fort was Fort Crèvecœur, built in 1680, near the site of Peoria. The memoir goes on to relate the descent of La Salle to the Gulf, which concluded this expedition of 1679-82.

<sup>3</sup> The following is an extract, given by Margry, from a letter of the aged Madeleine Cavelier, dated 21 Février, 1756, and addressed to her nephew, M. Le Baillif, who had applied for the papers in behalf of the minister, Silhouette: "J'ay cherché une occasion sûre pour vous envoyer les papiers de M. de la Salle. Il y a des cartes que j'ay jointe à ces papiers, qui doivent prouver que, en 1675, M. de Lasalle avet déjà fet deux voyages en ces decouverte, puisqu'il y avet une carte, que je vous envoie, par laquelle il est fait men-

Had they led him to the Mississippi, it is reasonably certain that she would have made it known in her memorial. La Salle discovered the Ohio, and in all probability the Illinois also; but that he discovered the Mississippi has not been proved, nor, in the light of the evidence we have, is it likely.

tion de l'endroit auquel M. de Lasalle aborda près le fleuve de Mississippi; un autre endroit qu'il nomme le fleuve Colbert; en un autre il prans possession de ce pais au nom du roy et fait planter une crois."

The words of the aged and illiterate writer are obscure, but her expression "aborda près" seems to indicate that La Salle had not reached the Mississippi prior to 1675, but only approached it.

Finally, a memorial presented to Seignelay, along with the official narrative of 1679-81, by a friend of La Salle, whose object was to place the discoverer and his achievements in the most favorable light, contains the following: "Il [*La Salle*] a esté le premier à former le dessein de ces decouvertes, qu'il communiqua, il y a plus de quinze ans, à M. de Courcelles, gouverneur, et à M. Talon, intendant du Canada, qui l'approuvèrent. Il a fait ensuite plusieurs voyages de ce costé-là, et un entr'autres en 1669 avec MM. Dolier et Galinée, prestres du Séminaire de St. Sulpice. *Il est vray que le sieur Jolliet, pour le prévenir, fit un voyage in 1673, à la rivière Colbert; mais ce fut uniquement pour y faire commerce.*" See Margry, ii. 285. This passage is a virtual admission that Joliet reached the Mississippi (*Colbert*) before La Salle.

Margry, in a series of papers in the *Journal Général de l'Instruction Publique* for 1862, first took the position that La Salle reached the Mississippi in 1670 and 1671, and has brought forward in defence of it all the documents which his unwearied research enabled him to discover. Father Tailhan, S. J., has replied at length, in the copious notes to his edition of Nicolas Perrot, but without having seen the principal document cited by Margry, and of which extracts have been given in the notes to this chapter.

## CHAPTER III.

1670-1672.

### THE JESUITS ON THE LAKES.

THE OLD MISSIONS AND THE NEW. — A CHANGE OF SPIRIT. — LAKE SUPERIOR AND THE COPPER-MINES. — STE. MARIE. — LA POINTE. — MICHILIMACKINAC. — JESUITS ON LAKE MICHIGAN. — ALLOUEZ AND DABLON. — THE JESUIT FUR-TRADE.

WHAT were the Jesuits doing? Since the ruin of their great mission of the Hurons, a perceptible change had taken place in them. They had put forth exertions almost superhuman, set at naught famine, disease, and death, lived with the self-abnegation of saints and died with the devotion of martyrs; and the result of all had been a disastrous failure. From no short-coming on their part, but from the force of events beyond the sphere of their influence, a very demon of havoc had crushed their incipient churches, slaughtered their converts, uprooted the populous communities on which their hopes had rested, and scattered them in bands of wretched fugitives far and wide through the wilderness.<sup>1</sup> They had devoted themselves in the fulness of faith to the building up

<sup>1</sup> See "The Jesuits in North America."



of a Christian and Jesuit empire on the conversion of the great stationary tribes of the lakes; and of these none remained but the Iroquois, the destroyers of the rest, — among whom, indeed, was a field which might stimulate their zeal by an abundant promise of sufferings and martyrdoms, but which, from its geographical position, was too much exposed to Dutch and English influence to promise great and decisive results. Their best hopes were now in the North and the West; and thither, in great part, they had turned their energies.

We find them on Lake Huron, Lake Superior, and Lake Michigan, laboring vigorously as of old, but in a spirit not quite the same. Now, as before, two objects inspired their zeal, — the “greater glory of God,” and the influence and credit of the Order of Jesus. If the one motive had somewhat lost in power, the other had gained. The epoch of the saints and martyrs was passing away; and henceforth we find the Canadian Jesuit less and less an apostle, more and more an explorer, a man of science, and a politician. The yearly reports of the missions are still, for the edification of the pious reader, filled with intolerably tedious stories of baptisms, conversions, and the exemplary deportment of neophytes, — for these have become a part of the formula; but they are relieved abundantly by more mundane topics. One finds observations on the winds, currents, and tides of the Great Lakes; speculations on a subterranean outlet of Lake Superior; accounts of

its copper-mines, and how we, the Jesuit fathers, are laboring to explore them for the profit of the colony; surmises touching the North Sea, the South Sea, the Sea of China, which we hope ere long to discover; and reports of that great mysterious river of which the Indians tell us, — flowing southward, perhaps to the Gulf of Mexico, perhaps to the Vermilion Sea, — and the secrets whereof, with the help of the Virgin, we will soon reveal to the world.

The Jesuit was as often a fanatic for his Order as for his faith; and oftener yet the two fanaticisms mingled in him inextricably. Ardently as he burned for the saving of souls, he would have none saved on the Upper Lakes except by his brethren and himself. He claimed a monopoly of conversion, with its attendant monopoly of toil, hardship, and martyrdom. Often disinterested for himself, he was inordinately ambitious for the great corporate power in which he had merged his own personality; and here lies one cause, among many, of the seeming contradictions which abound in the annals of the Order.

Prefixed to the *Relation* of 1671 is that monument of Jesuit hardihood and enterprise, the map of Lake Superior, — a work of which, however, the exactness has been exaggerated, as compared with other Canadian maps of the day. While making surveys, the priests were diligently looking for copper. Father Dablon reports that they had found it in greatest abundance on Isle Minong, now Isle Royale. “A day’s journey from the head of the lake, on the



south side, there is," he says, "a rock of copper weighing from six hundred to eight hundred pounds, lying on the shore where any who pass may see it;" and he further speaks of great copper boulders in the bed of the river Ontonagan.<sup>1</sup>

There were two principal missions on the Upper Lakes, which were, in a certain sense, the parents of the rest. One of these was Ste. Marie du Saut, — the same visited by Dollier and Galinée, — at the outlet of Lake Superior. This was a noted fishing-place; for the rapids were full of white-fish, and Indians came thither in crowds. The permanent residents were an Ojibwa band, whom the French called *Sauteurs*, and whose bark lodges were clustered

<sup>1</sup> He complains that the Indians were very averse to giving information on the subject, so that the Jesuits had not as yet discovered the metal *in situ*, though they hoped soon to do so. The Indians told him that the copper had first been found by four hunters, who had landed on a certain island, near the north shore of the lake. Wishing to boil their food in a vessel of bark, they gathered stones on the shore, heated them red hot, and threw them in, but presently discovered them to be pure copper. Their repast over, they hastened to re-embark, being afraid of the lynxes and the hares, which, on this island, were as large as dogs, and which would have devoured their provisions, and perhaps their canoe. They took with them some of the wonderful stones; but scarcely had they left the island, when a deep voice, like thunder, sounded in their ears, "Who are these thieves who steal the toys of my children?" It was the God of the Waters, or some other powerful manito. The four adventurers retreated in great terror; but three of them soon died, and the fourth survived only long enough to reach his village, and tell the story. The island has no foundation, but floats with the movement of the wind; and no Indian dares land on its shores, dreading the wrath of the manito. Dablon, *Relation*, 1670, 84.

at the foot of the rapids, near the fort of the Jesuits. Besides these, a host of Algonquins, of various tribes, resorted thither in the spring and summer, — living in abundance on the fishery, and dispersing in winter to wander and starve in scattered hunting-parties far and wide through the forests.

The other chief mission was that of St. Esprit, at La Pointe, near the western extremity of Lake Superior. Here were the Hurons, fugitives twenty years before from the slaughter of their countrymen; and the Ottawas, who, like them, had sought an asylum from the rage of the Iroquois. Many other tribes— Illinois, Pottawattamies, Foxes, Menomonies, Sioux, Assiniboins, Knisteneaux, and a multitude besides — came hither yearly to trade with the French. Here was a young Jesuit, Jacques Marquette, lately arrived from the Saut Ste. Marie. His savage flock disheartened him by its backslidings; and the best that he could report of the Hurons, after all the toil and all the blood lavished in their conversion, was, that they “still retain a little Christianity;” while the Ottawas are “far removed from the kingdom of God, and addicted beyond all other tribes to foulness, incantations, and sacrifices to evil spirits.”<sup>1</sup>

Marquette heard from the Illinois — yearly visitors at La Pointe — of the great river which they had crossed on their way,<sup>2</sup> and which, as he conjectured, flowed

<sup>1</sup> *Lettre du Père Jacques Marquette au R. P. Supérieur des Missions*; in *Relation*, 1670, 87.

<sup>2</sup> The Illinois lived at this time beyond the Mississippi, thirty

into the Gulf of California. He heard marvels of it also from the Sioux, who lived on its banks; and a strong desire possessed him to explore the mystery of its course. A sudden calamity dashed his hopes. The Sioux — the Iroquois of the West, as the Jesuits call them — had hitherto kept the peace with the expatriated tribes of La Pointe; but now, from some cause not worth inquiry, they broke into open war, and so terrified the Hurons and Ottawas that they abandoned their settlements and fled. Marquette followed his panic-stricken flock, who, passing the Saut Ste. Marie, and descending to Lake Huron, stopped at length, — the Hurons at Michilimackinac, and the Ottawas at the Great Manitoulin Island. Two missions were now necessary to minister to the divided bands. That of Michilimackinac was assigned to Marquette, and that of the Manitoulin Island to Louis André. The former took post at Point St. Ignace, on the north shore of the Straits of Michilimackinac, while the latter began the mission of St. Simon at the new abode of the Ottawas. When winter came, scattering his flock to their hunting-grounds, André made a missionary tour among the Nipissings and other neighboring tribes. The shores of Lake Huron had long been an utter

days' journey from La Pointe; whither they had been driven by the Iroquois, from their former abode near Lake Michigan. Dablon (*Relation*, 1671, 24, 25) says that they lived seven days' journey beyond the Mississippi, in eight villages. A few years later, most of them returned to the east side, and made their abode on the river Illinois.

solitude, swept of their denizens by the terror of the all-conquering Iroquois; but now that these tigers had felt the power of the French, and learned for a time to leave their Indian allies in peace, the fugitive hordes were returning to their ancient abodes. André's experience among them was of the roughest. The staple of his diet was acorns and *tripe de roche*, — a species of lichen, which, being boiled, resolved itself into a black glue, nauseous, but not void of nourishment. At times, he was reduced to moss, the bark of trees, or moccasins and old moose-skins cut into strips and boiled. His hosts treated him very ill, and the worst of their fare was always his portion. When spring came to his relief, he returned to his post of St. Simon, with impaired digestion and unabated zeal.

Besides the Saut Ste. Marie and Michilimackinac, both noted fishing-places, there was another spot, no less famous for game and fish, and therefore a favorite resort of Indians. This was the head of the Green Bay of Lake Michigan.<sup>1</sup> Here and in adjacent districts several distinct tribes had made their abode. The Menomonies were on the river which bears their name; the Pottawattamies and Winnebagoes were

<sup>1</sup> The Baye des Puants of the early writers; or, more correctly, La Baye des Eaux Puantes. The Winnebago Indians, living near it, were called Les Puans, apparently for no other reason than because some portion of the bay was said to have an odor like the sea.

Lake Michigan, the "Lac des Illinois" of the French, was, according to a letter of Father Allouez, called "Machihiganing" by the Indians. Dablon writes the name "Mitchiganon."

near the borders of the bay; the Sacs, on Fox River; the Mascoutins, Miamis, and Kickapoos, on the same river, above Lake Winnebago; and the Outagamies, or Foxes, on a tributary of it flowing from the north. Green Bay was manifestly suited for a mission; and, as early as the autumn of 1669, Father Claude Allouez was sent thither to found one. After nearly perishing by the way, he set out to explore the destined field of his labors, and went as far as the town of the Mascoutins. Early in the autumn of 1670, having been joined by Dablon, Superior of the missions on the Upper Lakes, he made another journey, but not until the two fathers had held a council with the congregated tribes at St. François Xavier; for so they named their mission of Green Bay. Here, as they harangued their naked audience, their gravity was put to the proof; for a band of warriors, anxious to do them honor, walked incessantly up and down, aping the movements of the soldiers on guard before the governor's tent at Montreal. "We could hardly keep from laughing," writes Dablon, "though we were discoursing on very important subjects; namely, the mysteries of our religion, and the things necessary to escaping from eternal fire."<sup>1</sup>

The fathers were delighted with the country, which Dablon calls an earthly paradise; but he adds that the way to it is as hard as the path to heaven. He alludes especially to the rapids of Fox River, which gave the two travellers great trouble. Having

<sup>1</sup> *Relation*, 1671, 43.

safely passed them, they saw an Indian idol on the bank, similar to that which Dollier and Galinée found at Detroit, — being merely a rock, bearing some resemblance to a man, and hideously painted. With the help of their attendants, they threw it into the river. Dablon expatiates on the buffalo, which he describes apparently on the report of others, as his description is not very accurate. Crossing Winnebago Lake, the two priests followed the river leading to the town of the Mascoutins and Miamis, which they reached on the fifteenth of September.<sup>1</sup> These two tribes lived together within the compass of the same enclosure of palisades, — to the number, it is said, of more than three thousand souls. The missionaries, who had brought a highly colored picture of the Last Judgment, called the Indians to council and displayed it before them; while Allouez, who spoke Algonquin, harangued them on hell, demons, and eternal flames. They listened with open ears, beset him night and day with questions, and invited him and his companion to unceasing feasts. They were welcomed in every lodge, and followed everywhere with eyes of curiosity, wonder, and awe. Dablon overflows with praises of the Miami chief, who was honored by his subjects like a king, and

<sup>1</sup> This town was on the Neenah or Fox River, above Lake Winnebago. The Mascoutins, Fire Nation, or Nation of the Prairie, are extinct or merged in other tribes. See "The Jesuits in North America." The Miamis soon removed to the banks of the river St. Joseph, near Lake Michigan.



whose demeanor towards his guests had no savor of the savage.

Their hosts told them of the great river Mississippi, rising far in the north and flowing southward, — they knew not whither, — and of many tribes that dwelt along its banks. When at length they took their departure, they left behind them a reputation as medicine-men of transcendent power.

In the winter following, Allouez visited the Foxes, whom he found in extreme ill-humor. They were incensed against the French by the ill-usage which some of their tribe had lately met when on a trading visit to Montreal; and they received the Faith with shouts of derision. The priest was horror-stricken at what he saw. Their lodges, each containing from five to ten families, seemed in his eyes like seraglios; for some of the chiefs had eight wives. He armed himself with patience, and at length gained a hearing. Nay, he succeeded so well, that when he showed them his crucifix they would throw tobacco on it as an offering; and, on another visit which he made them soon after, he taught the whole village to make the sign of the cross. A war-party was going out against their enemies, and he bethought him of telling them the story of the Cross and the Emperor Constantine. This so wrought upon them that they all daubed the figure of a cross on their shields of bull-hide, set out for the war, and came back victorious, extolling the sacred symbol as a great war-medicine.

"Thus it is," writes Dablon, who chronicles the incident, "that our holy faith is established among these people; and we have good hope that we shall soon carry it to the famous river called the Mississippi, and perhaps even to the South Sea."<sup>1</sup> Most things human have their phases of the ludicrous; and the heroism of these untiring priests is no exception to the rule.

The various missionary stations were much alike. They consisted of a chapel (commonly of logs) and one or more houses, with perhaps a storehouse and a workshop; the whole fenced with palisades, and forming, in fact, a stockade fort, surrounded with clearings and cultivated fields. It is evident that the priests had need of other hands than their own and those of the few lay brothers attached to the mission. They required men inured to labor, accustomed to the forest life, able to guide canoes and handle tools and weapons. In the earlier epoch of the missions, when enthusiasm was at its height, they were served in great measure by volunteers, who joined them through devotion or penitence, and who were known as *donnés*, or "given men." Of late, the number of these had much diminished; and they now relied chiefly on hired men, or *engagés*. These were employed in building, hunting, fishing, clearing, and tilling the ground, guiding canoes, and (if faith is to be placed in reports current throughout the colony) in trading with the Indians for the profit

<sup>1</sup> *Relation*, 1672, 42.



of the missions. This charge of trading — which, if the results were applied exclusively to the support of the missions, does not of necessity involve much censure — is vehemently reiterated in many quarters, including the official despatches of the governor of Canada; while, so far as I can discover, the Jesuits never distinctly denied it, and on several occasions they partially admitted its truth.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This charge was made from the first establishment of the missions. For remarks on it, see “The Jesuits in North America” and “The Old Régime in Canada.”

## CHAPTER IV.

1667-1672.

### FRANCE TAKES POSSESSION OF THE WEST.

TALON. — SAINT-LUSSON. — PERROT. — THE CEREMONY AT SAUT STE. MARIE. — THE SPEECH OF ALLOUEZ. — COUNT FRONTENAC.

JEAN TALON, intendant of Canada, was full of projects for the good of the colony. On the one hand, he set himself to the development of its industries, and, on the other, to the extension of its domain. He meant to occupy the interior of the continent, control the rivers, which were its only highways, and hold it for France against every other nation. On the east, England was to be hemmed within a narrow strip of seaboard; while, on the south, Talon aimed at securing a port on the Gulf of Mexico, to keep the Spaniards in check, and dispute with them the possession of the vast regions which they claimed as their own. But the interior of the continent was still an unknown world. It behooved him to explore it; and to that end he availed himself of Jesuits, officers, fur-traders, and enterprising schemers like La Salle. His efforts at discovery seem to have been conducted with a singular economy

*Jean Talon.*







of the King's purse. La Salle paid all the expenses of his first expedition made under Talon's auspices; and apparently of the second also, though the intendant announces it in his despatches as an expedition sent out by himself.<sup>1</sup> When, in 1670, he ordered Daumont de Saint-Lusson to search for copper mines on Lake Superior, and at the same time to take formal possession of the whole interior for the King, it was arranged that he should pay the costs of the journey by trading with the Indians.<sup>2</sup>

Saint-Lusson set out with a small party of men, and Nicolas Perrot as his interpreter. Among Canadian *voyageurs*, few names are so conspicuous as that of Perrot; not because there were not others who matched him in achievement, but because he could write, and left behind him a tolerable account of what he had seen.<sup>3</sup> He was at this time twenty-six years old, and had formerly been an *engagé* of the Jesuits. He was a man of enterprise, courage, and

<sup>1</sup> At least, La Salle was in great need of money, about the time of his second journey. On the sixth of August, 1671, he had received on credit, "dans son grand besoin et nécessité," from Branssac, fiscal attorney of the Seminary, merchandise to the amount of four hundred and fifty livres; and on the eighteenth of December of the following year he gave his promise to pay the same sum, in money or furs, in the August following. Faillon found the papers in the ancient records of Montreal.

<sup>2</sup> In his despatch of 2d Nov., 1671, Talon writes to the King that "Saint-Lusson's expedition will cost nothing, as he has received beaver enough from the Indians to pay him."

<sup>3</sup> *Mœurs, Coustumes, et Religion des Sauvages de l'Amérique Septentrionale*. This work of Perrot, hitherto unpublished, appeared in 1864, under the editorship of Father Tailhan, S. J. A great part of it is incorporated in La Potherie.

address, — the last being especially shown in his dealings with Indians, over whom he had great influence. He spoke Algonquin fluently, and was favorably known to many tribes of that family.

Saint-Lusson wintered at the Manitoulin Islands; while Perrot, having first sent messages to the tribes of the north, inviting them to meet the deputy of the governor at the Saut Ste. Marie in the following spring, proceeded to Green Bay, to urge the same invitation upon the tribes of that quarter. They knew him well, and greeted him with clamors of welcome. The Miamis, it is said, received him with a sham battle, which was designed to do him honor, but by which nerves more susceptible would have been severely shaken.<sup>1</sup> They entertained him also with a grand game of *la crosse*, the Indian ball-play. Perrot gives a marvellous account of the authority and state of the Miami chief, who, he says, was attended day and night by a guard of warriors, — an assertion which would be incredible, were it not sustained by the account of the same chief given by the Jesuit Dablon. Of the tribes of the Bay, the greater part promised to send delegates to the Saut; but the Pottawattamies dissuaded the Miami potentate from attempting so long a journey, lest the fatigue incident to it might injure his health; and he

<sup>1</sup> See La Potherie, ii. 125. Perrot himself does not mention it. Charlevoix erroneously places this interview at Chicago. Perrot's narrative shows that he did not go farther than the tribes of Green Bay; and the Miamis were then, as we have seen, on the upper part of Fox River.



therefore deputed them to represent him and his tribesmen at the great meeting. Their principal chiefs, with those of the Sacs, Winnebagoes, and Menomonies, embarked, and paddled for the place of rendezvous, where they and Perrot arrived on the fifth of May.<sup>1</sup>

Saint-Lusson was here with his men, fifteen in number, among whom was Louis Joliet;<sup>2</sup> and Indians were fast thronging in from their wintering grounds, attracted, as usual, by the fishery of the rapids or moved by the messages sent by Perrot, — Crees, Monsonis, Amikoués, Nipissings, and many more. When fourteen tribes, or their representatives, had arrived, Saint-Lusson prepared to execute the commission with which he was charged.

At the foot of the rapids was the village of the Sauteurs, above the village was a hill, and hard by stood the fort of the Jesuits. On the morning of the fourteenth of June, Saint-Lusson led his followers to the top of the hill, all fully equipped and under arms. Here, too, in the vestments of their priestly office, were four Jesuits, — Claude Dablon, Superior of the Missions of the lakes, Gabriel Druilletes, Claude Allouez, and Louis André.<sup>3</sup> All around the great throng of Indians stood, or crouched, or reclined at length, with eyes and ears intent. A

<sup>1</sup> Perrot, *Mémoires*, 127.

<sup>2</sup> *Procès Verbal de la Prise de Possession, etc.*, 14 Juin, 1671. The names are attached to this instrument.

<sup>3</sup> Marquette is said to have been present; but the official act, just cited, proves the contrary. He was still at St. Esprit.

large cross of wood had been made ready. Dablon, in solemn form, pronounced his blessing on it; and then it was reared and planted in the ground, while the Frenchmen, uncovered, sang the *Vexilla Regis*. Then a post of cedar was planted beside it, with a metal plate attached, engraven with the royal arms; while Saint-Lusson's followers sang the *Exaudiat*, and one of the Jesuits uttered a prayer for the King. Saint-Lusson now advanced, and, holding his sword in one hand, and raising with the other a sod of earth, proclaimed in a loud voice, —

“In the name of the Most High, Mighty, and Redoubted Monarch, Louis, Fourteenth of that name, Most Christian King of France and of Navarre, I take possession of this place, Sainte Marie du Saut, as also of Lakes Huron and Superior, the Island of Manitoulin, and all countries, rivers, lakes, and streams contiguous and adjacent thereunto, — both those which have been discovered and those which may be discovered hereafter, in all their length and breadth, bounded on the one side by the seas of the North and of the West, and on the other by the South Sea: declaring to the nations thereof that from this time forth they are vassals of his Majesty, bound to obey his laws and follow his customs; promising them on his part all succor and protection against the incursions and invasions of their enemies: declaring to all other potentates, princes, sovereigns, states, and republics, — to them and to their subjects, — that they cannot and are not to seize or settle upon any

parts of the aforesaid countries, save only under the good pleasure of His Most Christian Majesty, and of him who will govern in his behalf; and this on pain of incurring his resentment and the efforts of his arms. *Vive le Roi.*"<sup>1</sup>

The Frenchmen fired their guns and shouted "Vive le Roi," and the yelps of the astonished Indians mingled with the din.

What now remains of the sovereignty thus pompously proclaimed? Now and then the accents of France on the lips of some straggling boatman or vagabond half-breed, — this, and nothing more.

When the uproar was over, Father Allouez addressed the Indians in a solemn harangue; and these were his words: "It is a good work, my brothers, an important work, a great work, that brings us together in council to-day. Look up at the cross which rises so high above your heads. It was there that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, after making himself a man for the love of men, was nailed and died, to satisfy his Eternal Father for our sins. He is the master of our lives; the ruler of Heaven, Earth, and Hell. It is he of whom I am continually speaking to you, and whose name and word I have borne through all your country. But look at this post to which are fixed the arms of the great chief of France, whom we call King. He lives across the sea. He is the chief of the greatest chiefs, and has no equal on earth. All the chiefs whom you have ever seen are but children

<sup>1</sup> *Procès Verbal de la Prise de Possession.*

beside him. He is like a great tree, and they are but the little herbs that one walks over and tramples under foot. You know Onontio,<sup>1</sup> that famous chief at Quebec; you know and you have seen that he is the terror of the Iroquois, and that his very name makes them tremble, since he has laid their country waste and burned their towns with fire. Across the sea there are ten thousand Onontios like him, who are but the warriors of our great King, of whom I have told you. When he says, 'I am going to war,' everybody obeys his orders; and each of these ten thousand chiefs raises a troop of a hundred warriors, some on sea and some on land. Some embark in great ships, such as you have seen at Quebec. Your canoes carry only four or five men, or, at the most, ten or twelve; but our ships carry four or five hundred, and sometimes a thousand. Others go to war by land, and in such numbers that if they stood in a double file they would reach from here to Mississaugenk, which is more than twenty leagues off. When our King attacks his enemies, he is more terrible than the thunder: the earth trembles; the air and the sea are all on fire with the blaze of his cannon: he is seen in the midst of his warriors, covered over with the blood of his enemies, whom he kills in such numbers that he does not reckon them by the scalps, but by the streams of blood which he causes to flow. He takes so many prisoners that he holds them in no account, but lets them go where they will, to show

<sup>1</sup> The Indian name of the governor of Canada.

that he is not afraid of them. But now nobody dares make war on him. All the nations beyond the sea have submitted to him and begged humbly for peace. Men come from every quarter of the earth to listen to him and admire him. All that is done in the world is decided by him alone.

"But what shall I say of his riches? You think yourselves rich when you have ten or twelve sacks of corn, a few hatchets, beads, kettles, and other things of that sort. He has cities of his own, more than there are of men in all this country for five hundred leagues around. In each city there are storehouses where there are hatchets enough to cut down all your forests, kettles enough to cook all your moose, and beads enough to fill all your lodges. His house is longer than from here to the top of the Saut, — that is to say, more than half a league, — and higher than your tallest trees; and it holds more families than the largest of your towns."<sup>1</sup> The father added more in a similar strain; but the peroration of his harangue is not on record.

Whatever impression this curious effort of Jesuit rhetoric may have produced upon the hearers, it did not prevent them from stripping the royal arms from the post to which they were nailed, as soon as Saint-Lusson and his men had left the Saut; probably, not because they understood the import of the symbol, but because they feared it as a charm. Saint-Lusson

<sup>1</sup> A close translation of Dablon's report of the speech. See *Relation*, 1671, 27.

proceeded to Lake Superior, where, however, he accomplished nothing, except, perhaps, a traffic with the Indians on his own account; and he soon after returned to Quebec. Talon was resolved to find the Mississippi, the most interesting object of search, and seemingly the most attainable, in the wild and vague domain which he had just claimed for the King. The Indians had described it; the Jesuits were eager to discover it; and La Salle, if he had not reached it, had explored two several avenues by which it might be approached. Talon looked about him for a fit agent of the enterprise, and made choice of Louis Joliet, who had returned from Lake Superior.<sup>1</sup> But the intendant was not to see the fulfilment of his design. His busy and useful career in Canada was drawing to an end. A misunderstanding had arisen between him and the governor, Courcelle. Both were faithful servants of the King; but the relations between the two chiefs of the colony were of a nature necessarily so critical, that a conflict of authority was scarcely to be avoided. Each thought his functions encroached upon, and both asked for recall. Another governor succeeded; one who was to stamp his mark, broad, bold, and ineffaceable, on the most memorable page of French-American History, — Louis de Buade, Count of Palluau and Frontenac.

<sup>1</sup> *Lettre de Frontenac au Ministre*, 2 Nov., 1672. In the Brodhead Collection, by a copyist's error, the name of the Chevalier de Grandfontaine is substituted for that of Talon.

## CHAPTER V.

1672-1675.

### THE DISCOVERY OF THE MISSISSIPPI.

JOLIET SENT TO FIND THE MISSISSIPPI.—JACQUES MARQUETTE.—  
DEPARTURE.—GREEN BAY.—THE WISCONSIN.—THE MISSIS-  
SIPPI.—INDIANS.—MANITOUS.—THE ARKANSAS.—THE ILLI-  
NOIS.—JOLIET'S MISFORTUNE.—MARQUETTE AT CHICAGO: HIS  
ILLNESS; HIS DEATH.

IF Talon had remained in the colony, Frontenac would infallibly have quarrelled with him; but he was too clear-sighted not to approve his plans for the discovery and occupation of the interior. Before sailing for France, Talon recommended Joliet as a suitable agent for the discovery of the Mississippi, and the governor accepted his counsel.<sup>1</sup>

Louis Joliet was the son of a wagon-maker in the service of the Company of the Hundred Associates,<sup>2</sup> then owners of Canada. He was born at Quebec in 1645, and was educated by the Jesuits. When still very young, he resolved to be a priest. He received the tonsure and the minor orders at the age of seven-

<sup>1</sup> *Lettre de Frontenac au Ministre*, 2 Nov., 1672; *Ibid.*, 14 Nov., 1674.

<sup>2</sup> See "The Jesuits in North America."



teen. Four years after, he is mentioned with especial honor for the part he bore in the disputes in philosophy, at which the dignitaries of the colony were present, and in which the intendant himself took part.<sup>1</sup> Not long after, he renounced his clerical vocation, and turned fur-trader. Talon sent him, with one Péré, to explore the copper-mines of Lake Superior; and it was on his return from this expedition that he met La Salle and the Sulpitians near the head of Lake Ontario.<sup>2</sup>

In what we know of Joliet, there is nothing that reveals any salient or distinctive trait of character, any especial breadth of view or boldness of design. He appears to have been simply a merchant, intelligent, well educated, courageous, hardy, and enterprising. Though he had renounced the priesthood, he retained his partiality for the Jesuits; and it is more than probable that their influence had aided not a little to determine Talon's choice. One of their

<sup>1</sup> "Le 2 Juillet (1666) les premières disputes de philosophie se font dans la congrégation avec succès. Toutes les puissances s'y trouvent; M. l'Intendant entr'autres y a argumenté très-bien. M. Joliet et Pierre Francheville y ont très-bien répondu de toute la logique." — *Journal des Jésuites*.

<sup>2</sup> Nothing was known of Joliet till Shea investigated his history. Ferland, in his *Notes sur les Régistres de Notre-Dame de Québec*; Faillon, in his *Colonie Française en Canada*; and Margry, in a series of papers in the *Journal Général de l'Instruction Publique*, — have thrown much new light on his life. From journals of a voyage made by him at a later period to the coast of Labrador, given in substance by Margry, he seems to have been a man of close and intelligent observation. His mathematical acquirements appear to have been very considerable.



number, Jacques Marquette, was chosen to accompany him.

He passed up the lakes to Michilimackinac, and found his destined companion at Point St. Ignace, on the north side of the strait, where, in his palisaded mission-house and chapel, he had labored for two years past to instruct the Huron refugees from St. Esprit, and a band of Ottawas who had joined them. Marquette was born in 1637, of an old and honorable family at Laon, in the north of France, and was now thirty-five years of age. When about seventeen, he had joined the Jesuits, evidently from motives purely religious; and in 1666 he was sent to the missions of Canada. At first, he was destined to the station of Tadoussac; and to prepare himself for it, he studied the Montagnais language under Gabriel Druilletes. But his destination was changed, and he was sent to the Upper Lakes in 1668, where he had since remained. His talents as a linguist must have been great; for within a few years he learned to speak with ease six Indian languages. The traits of his character are unmistakable. He was of the brotherhood of the early Canadian missionaries, and the true counterpart of Garnier or Jogues. He was a devout votary of the Virgin Mary, who, imaged to his mind in shapes of the most transcendent loveliness with which the pencil of human genius has ever informed the canvas, was to him the object of an adoration not unmingled with a sentiment of chivalrous devotion. The longings of a sensitive heart,

divorced from earth, sought solace in the skies. A subtile element of romance was blended with the fervor of his worship, and hung like an illumined cloud over the harsh and hard realities of his daily lot. Kindled by the smile of his celestial mistress, his gentle and noble nature knew no fear. For her he burned to dare and to suffer, discover new lands and conquer new realms to her sway.

He begins the journal of his voyage thus: "The day of the Immaculate Conception of the Holy Virgin; whom I had continually invoked since I came to this country of the Ottawas to obtain from God the favor of being enabled to visit the nations on the river Mississippi, — this very day was precisely that on which M. Joliet arrived with orders from Count Frontenac, our governor, and from M. Talon, our intendant, to go with me on this discovery. I was all the more delighted at this good news, because I saw my plans about to be accomplished, and found myself in the happy necessity of exposing my life for the salvation of all these tribes, — and especially of the Illinois, who, when I was at Point St. Esprit, had begged me very earnestly to bring the word of God among them."

The outfit of the travellers was very simple. They provided themselves with two birch canoes, and a supply of smoked meat and Indian corn; embarked with five men, and began their voyage on the seventeenth of May. They had obtained all possible information from the Indians, and had made, by means

of it, a species of map of their intended route. "Above all," writes Marquette, "I placed our voyage under the protection of the Holy Virgin Immaculate, promising that if she granted us the favor of discovering the great river, I would give it the name of the Conception."<sup>1</sup> Their course was westward; and, plying their paddles, they passed the Straits of Michilimackinae, and coasted the northern shores of Lake Michigan, landing at evening to build their camp-fire at the edge of the forest, and draw up their canoes on the strand. They soon reached the river Menomonie, and ascended it to the village of the Menomonies, or Wild-rice Indians.<sup>2</sup> When they told them the object of their voyage, they were filled with astonishment, and used their best ingenuity to dissuade them. The banks of the Mississippi, they said, were inhabited by ferocious tribes, who put every stranger to death, tomahawking all new-comers without cause or provocation. They added that there was a demon in a certain part of the river, whose roar could be heard at a great distance, and who would engulf them in the abyss where he dwelt; that its waters were full of frightful monsters, who would devour them and their canoe; and, finally, that the

<sup>1</sup> The doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, sanctioned in our own time by the Pope, was always a favorite tenet of the Jesuits; and Marquette was especially devoted to it.

<sup>2</sup> The Malhoumines, Malouminek, Onmalouminek, or Nation des Folles-Avoines, of early French writers. The *folle-avoine*, wild oats or "wild rice" (*Zizania aquatica*), was their ordinary food, as also of other tribes of this region.

heat was so great that they would perish inevitably. Marquette set their counsel at naught, gave them a few words of instruction in the mysteries of the Faith, taught them a prayer, and bade them farewell.

The travellers next reached the mission at the head of Green Bay; entered Fox River; with difficulty and labor dragged their canoes up the long and tumultuous rapids; crossed Lake Winnebago; and followed the quiet windings of the river beyond, where they glided through an endless growth of wild rice, and scared the innumerable birds that fed upon it. On either hand rolled the prairie, dotted with groves and trees, browsing elk and deer.<sup>1</sup> On the seventh of June, they reached the Mascoutins and Miamis, who, since the visit of Dablon and Allouez, had been joined by the Kickapoos. Marquette, who had an eye for natural beauty, was delighted with the situation of the town, which he describes as standing on the crown of a hill; while, all around, the prairie stretched beyond the sight, interspersed with groves and belts of tall forest. But he was still more delighted when he saw a cross planted in the midst of the place. The Indians had decorated it with a number of dressed deer-skins, red girdles, and bows and arrows, which they had hung upon it as an offering to the Great Manitou of the French; a sight by which Marquette says he was "extremely consoled."

<sup>1</sup> Dablon, on his journey with Allouez in 1670, was delighted with the aspect of the country and the abundance of game along this river. Carver, a century later, speaks to the same effect, saying that the birds rose up in clouds from the wild-rice marshes.

The travellers had no sooner reached the town than they called the chiefs and elders to a council. Joliet told them that the governor of Canada had sent him to discover new countries, and that God had sent his companion to teach the true faith to the inhabitants; and he prayed for guides to show them the way to the waters of the Wisconsin. The council readily consented; and on the tenth of June the Frenchmen embarked again, with two Indians to conduct them. All the town came down to the shore to see their departure. Here were the Miamis, with long locks of hair dangling over each ear, after a fashion which Marquette thought very becoming; and here, too, the Mascoutins and the Kickapoos, whom he describes as mere boors in comparison with their Miami townsmen. All stared alike at the seven adventurers, marvelling that men could be found to risk an enterprise so hazardous.

The river twisted among lakes and marshes choked with wild rice; and, but for their guides, they could scarcely have followed the perplexed and narrow channel. It brought them at last to the portage, where, after carrying their canoes a mile and a half over the prairie and through the marsh, they launched them on the Wisconsin, bade farewell to the waters that flowed to the St. Lawrence, and committed themselves to the current that was to bear them they knew not whither, — perhaps to the Gulf of Mexico, perhaps to the South Sea or the Gulf of California. They glided calmly down the tranquil stream, by

islands choked with trees and matted with entangling grape-vines; by forests, groves, and prairies, the parks and pleasure-grounds of a prodigal Nature; by thickets and marshes and broad bare sand-bars; under the shadowing trees, between whose tops looked down from afar the bold brow of some woody bluff. At night, the bivouac, — the canoes inverted on the bank, the flickering fire, the meal of bison-flesh or venison, the evening pipes, and slumber beneath the stars; and when in the morning they embarked again, the mist hung on the river like a bridal veil, then melted before the sun, till the glassy water and the languid woods basked breathless in the sultry glare.<sup>1</sup>

On the seventeenth of June they saw on their right the broad meadows, bounded in the distance by rugged hills, where now stand the town and fort of Prairie du Chien. Before them a wide and rapid current coursed athwart their way, by the foot of lofty heights wrapped thick in forests. They had found what they sought, and "with a joy," writes Marquette, "which I cannot express," they steered forth their canoes on the eddies of the Mississippi.

Turning southward, they paddled down the stream, through a solitude unrelieved by the faintest trace of man. A large fish, apparently one of the huge cat-fish of the Mississippi, blundered against Marquette's canoe, with a force which seems to have startled him; and once, as they drew in their net, they caught

<sup>1</sup> The above traits of the scenery of the Wisconsin are taken from personal observation of the river during midsummer.



a "spade-fish," whose eccentric appearance greatly astonished them. At length the buffalo began to appear, grazing in herds on the great prairies which then bordered the river; and Marquette describes the fierce and stupid look of the old bulls, as they stared at the intruders through the tangled mane which nearly blinded them.

They advanced with extreme caution, landed at night, and made a fire to cook their evening meal; then extinguished it, embarked again, paddled some way farther, and anchored in the stream, keeping a man on the watch till morning. They had journeyed more than a fortnight without meeting a human being, when, on the twenty-fifth, they discovered footprints of men in the mud of the western bank, and a well-trodden path that led to the adjacent prairie. Joliet and Marquette resolved to follow it; and leaving the canoes in charge of their men, they set out on their hazardous adventure. The day was fair, and they walked two leagues in silence, following the path through the forest and across the sunny prairie, till they discovered an Indian village on the banks of a river, and two others on a hill half a league distant.<sup>1</sup> Now, with beating hearts, they invoked the aid of Heaven, and, again advancing, came so near, without being seen, that they could

<sup>1</sup> The Indian villages, under the names of *Peouaria* (*Peoria*) and *Moingouena*, are represented in Marquette's map upon a river corresponding in position with the *Des Moines*; though the distance from the *Wisconsin*, as given by him, would indicate a river farther north.

hear the voices of the Indians among the wigwams. Then they stood forth in full view, and shouted to attract attention. There was great commotion in the village. The inmates swarmed out of their huts, and four of their chief men presently came forward to meet the strangers, advancing very deliberately, and holding up toward the sun two calumets, or peace-pipes, decorated with feathers. They stopped abruptly before the two Frenchmen, and stood gazing at them without speaking a word. Marquette was much relieved on seeing that they wore French cloth, whence he judged that they must be friends and allies. He broke the silence, and asked them who they were; whereupon they answered that they were Illinois, and offered the pipe; which having been duly smoked, they all went together to the village. Here the chief received the travellers after a singular fashion, meant to do them honor. He stood stark naked at the door of a large wigwam, holding up both hands as if to shield his eyes. "Frenchmen, how bright the sun shines when you come to visit us! All our village awaits you; and you shall enter our wigwams in peace." So saying, he led them into his own, which was crowded to suffocation with savages, staring at their guests in silence. Having smoked with the chiefs and old men, they were invited to visit the great chief of all the Illinois, at one of the villages they had seen in the distance; and thither they proceeded, followed by a throng of warriors, squaws, and children. On



arriving, they were forced to smoke again, and listen to a speech of welcome from the great chief, who delivered it standing between two old men, naked like himself. His lodge was crowded with the dignitaries of the tribe, whom Marquette addressed in Algonquin, announcing himself as a messenger sent by the God who had made them, and whom it behooves them to recognize and obey. He added a few words touching the power and glory of Count Frontenac, and concluded by asking information concerning the Mississippi, and the tribes along its banks, whom he was on his way to visit. The chief replied with a speech of compliment; assuring his guests that their presence added flavor to his tobacco, made the river more calm, the sky more serene, and the earth more beautiful. In conclusion, he gave them a young slave and a calumet, begging them at the same time to abandon their purpose of descending the Mississippi.

A feast of four courses now followed. First, a wooden bowl full of a porridge of Indian meal boiled with grease was set before the guests; and the master of ceremonies fed them in turn, like infants, with a large spoon. Then appeared a platter of fish; and the same functionary, carefully removing the bones with his fingers, and blowing on the morsels to cool them, placed them in the mouths of the two Frenchmen. A large dog, killed and cooked for the occasion, was next placed before them; but, failing to tempt their fastidious appetites, was supplanted by a

dish of fat buffalo-meat, which concluded the entertainment. The crowd having dispersed, buffalo-robcs were spread on the ground, and Marquette and Joliet spent the night on the scene of the late festivity. In the morning, the chief, with some six hundred of his tribesmen, escorted them to their canoes, and bade them, after their stolid fashion, a friendly farewell.

Again they were on their way, slowly drifting down the great river. They passed the mouth of the Illinois, and glided beneath that line of rocks on the eastern side, cut into fantastic forms by the elements, and marked as "The Ruined Castles" on some of the early French maps. Presently they beheld a sight which reminded them that the Devil was still lord paramount of this wilderness. On the flat face of a high rock were painted, in red, black, and green, a pair of monsters, each "as large as a calf, with horns like a deer, red eyes, a beard like a tiger, and a frightful expression of countenance. The face is something like that of a man, the body covered with scales; and the tail so long that it passes entirely round the body, over the head and between the legs, ending like that of a fish." Such is the account which the worthy Jesuit gives of these manitous, or Indian gods.<sup>1</sup> He confesses that at first they fright-

<sup>1</sup> The rock where these figures were painted is immediately above the city of Alton. The tradition of their existence remains, though they are entirely effaced by time. In 1867, when I passed the place, a part of the rock had been quarried away, and, instead of Marquette's monsters, it bore a huge advertisement of "Plantation

ened him; and his imagination and that of his credulous companions was so wrought upon by these unhallowed efforts of Indian art, that they continued for a long time to talk of them as they plied their paddles. They were thus engaged, when they were suddenly aroused by a real danger. A torrent of yellow mud rushed furiously athwart the calm blue current of the Mississippi, boiling and surging, and sweeping in its course logs, branches, and uprooted trees. They had reached the mouth of the Missouri, where that savage river, descending from its mad career through a vast unknown of barbarism, poured its turbid floods into the bosom of its gentler sister. Their light canoes whirled on the miry vortex like dry leaves on an angry brook. "I never," writes Marquette, "saw anything more terrific;" but they escaped with their fright, and held their way down the turbulent and swollen current of the now united rivers.<sup>1</sup> They passed the lonely forest that covered

Bitters." Some years ago, certain persons, with more zeal than knowledge, proposed to restore the figures, after conceptions of their own; but the idea was abandoned.

Marquette made a drawing of the two monsters, but it is lost. I have, however, a fac-simile of a map made a few years later, by order of the Intendant Duchesneau, which is decorated with the portrait of one of them, answering to Marquette's description, and probably copied from his drawing. St. Cosme, who saw them in 1699, says that they were even then almost effaced. Douay and Joutel also speak of them,—the former, bitterly hostile to his Jesuit contemporaries, charging Marquette with exaggeration in his account of them. Joutel could see nothing terrifying in their appearance; but he says that his Indians made sacrifices to them as they passed.

<sup>1</sup> The Missouri is called "Pekitanoui" by Marquette. It also

the site of the destined city of St. Louis, and, a few days later, saw on their left the mouth of the stream to which the Iroquois had given the well-merited name of Ohio, or the "Beautiful River."<sup>1</sup> Soon they began to see the marshy shores buried in a dense growth of the cane, with its tall straight stems and feathery light-green foliage. The sun glowed through the hazy air with a languid stifling heat, and by day and night mosquitoes in myriads left them no peace. They floated slowly down the current, crouched in the shade of the sails which they had spread as awnings, when suddenly they saw Indians on the east bank. The surprise was mutual, and each party was as much frightened as the other. Marquette hastened to display the calumet which the Illinois had given him by way of passport; and the Indians, recognizing the pacific symbol, replied with an invitation to land. Evidently, they were in communication with Europeans, for they were armed with guns, knives, and hatchets, wore garments of cloth, and carried their gunpowder in small bottles of thick glass. They feasted the Frenchmen with buffalo-meat, bear's oil, and white plums; and gave them a variety of doubtful in-  
 bears, on early French maps, the names of "*Rivière des Osages*," and "*Rivière des Emissourites*," or "*Oumessourits*." On Marquette's map, a tribe of this name is placed near its banks, just above the Osages. Judging by the course of the Mississippi that it discharged into the Gulf of Mexico, he conceived the hope of one day reaching the South Sea by way of the Missouri.

<sup>1</sup> Called, on Marquette's map, "*Ouabouskiaou*." On some of the earliest maps, it is called "*Ouabache*" (Wabash).

formation, including the agreeable but delusive assurance that they would reach the mouth of the river in ten days. It was, in fact, more than a thousand miles distant.

They resumed their course, and again floated down the interminable monotony of river, marsh, and forest. Day after day passed on in solitude, and they had paddled some three hundred miles since their meeting with the Indians, when, as they neared the mouth of the Arkansas, they saw a cluster of wigwams on the west bank. Their inmates were all astir, yelling the war-whoop, snatching their weapons, and running to the shore to meet the strangers, who, on their part, called for succor to the Virgin. In truth, they had need of her aid; for several large wooden canoes, filled with savages, were putting out from the shore, above and below them, to cut off their retreat, while a swarm of headlong young warriors waded into the water to attack them. The current proved too strong; and, failing to reach the canoes of the Frenchmen, one of them threw his war-club, which flew over the heads of the startled travelers. Meanwhile, Marquette had not ceased to hold up his calumet, to which the excited crowd gave no heed, but strung their bows and notched their arrows for immediate action; when at length the elders of the village arrived, saw the peace-pipe, restrained the ardor of the youth, and urged the Frenchmen to come ashore. Marquette and his companions complied, trembling, and found a better reception than

they had reason to expect. One of the Indians spoke a little Illinois, and served as interpreter; a friendly conference was followed by a feast of sagamite and fish; and the travellers, not without sore misgivings, spent the night in the lodges of their entertainers.<sup>1</sup>

Early in the morning, they embarked again, and proceeded to a village of the Arkansas tribe, about eight leagues below. Notice of their coming was sent before them by their late hosts; and as they drew near they were met by a canoe, in the prow of which stood a naked personage, holding a calumet, singing, and making gestures of friendship. On reaching the village, which was on the east side,<sup>2</sup> opposite the mouth of the river Arkansas, they were conducted to a sort of scaffold, before the lodge of the war-chief. The space beneath had been prepared for their reception, the ground being neatly covered with rush mats. On these they were seated; the warriors sat around them in a semi-circle; then the elders of the tribe; and then the promiscuous crowd of villagers, standing, and staring over the heads of the more dignified members of the assembly. All the men were naked; but, to compensate for the lack of clothing, they wore strings of beads in their noses and ears. The women were clothed in shabby skins, and wore their hair clumped in a mass behind each

<sup>1</sup> This village, called "Mitchigamea," is represented on several contemporary maps.

<sup>2</sup> A few years later, the Arkansas were all on the west side.



ear. By good luck, there was a young Indian in the village, who had an excellent knowledge of Illinois; and through him Marquette endeavored to explain the mysteries of Christianity, and to gain information concerning the river below. To this end he gave his auditors the presents indispensable on such occasions, but received very little in return. They told him that the Mississippi was infested by hostile Indians, armed with guns procured from white men; and that they, the Arkansas, stood in such fear of them that they dared not hunt the buffalo, but were forced to live on Indian corn, of which they raised three crops a year.

During the speeches on either side, food was brought in without ceasing, — sometimes a platter of saganite or mush; sometimes of corn boiled whole; sometimes a roasted dog. The villagers had large earthen pots and platters, made by themselves with tolerable skill, as well as hatchets, knives, and beads, gained by traffic with the Illinois and other tribes in contact with the French or Spaniards. All day there was feasting without respite, after the merciless practice of Indian hospitality; but at night some of their entertainers proposed to kill and plunder them, — a scheme which was defeated by the vigilance of the chief, who visited their quarters, and danced the calumet dance to reassure his guests.

The travellers now held counsel as to what course they should take. They had gone far enough, as they thought, to establish one important point, —

that the Mississippi discharged its waters, not into the Atlantic or sea of Virginia, nor into the Gulf of California or Vermilion Sea, but into the Gulf of Mexico. They thought themselves nearer to its mouth than they actually were, the distance being still about seven hundred miles; and they feared that if they went farther they might be killed by Indians or captured by Spaniards, whereby the results of their discovery would be lost. Therefore they resolved to return to Canada, and report what they had seen.

They left the Arkansas village, and began their homeward voyage on the seventeenth of July. It was no easy task to urge their way upward, in the heat of midsummer, against the current of the dark and gloomy stream, toiling all day under the parching sun, and sleeping at night in the exhalations of the unwholesome shore, or in the narrow confines of their birchen vessels, anchored on the river. Marquette was attacked with dysentery. Languid and well-nigh spent, he invoked his celestial mistress, as day after day, and week after week, they won their slow way northward. At length, they reached the Illinois, and, entering its mouth, followed its course, charmed, as they went, with its placid waters, its shady forests, and its rich plains, grazed by the bison and the deer. They stopped at a spot soon to be made famous in the annals of western discovery. This was a village of the Illinois, then called "Kaskaskia;" a name afterwards transferred to



another locality.<sup>1</sup> A chief, with a band of young warriors, offered to guide them to the Lake of the Illinois; that is to say, Lake Michigan. Thither they repaired; and, coasting its shores, reached Green Bay at the end of September, after an absence of about four months, during which they had paddled their canoes somewhat more than two thousand five hundred miles.<sup>2</sup>

Marquette remained to recruit his exhausted strength; but Joliet descended to Quebec, to bear the report of his discovery to Count Frontenac. Fortune had wonderfully favored him on his long and perilous journey; but now she abandoned him on the very threshold of home. At the foot of the rapids of La Chine, and immediately above Montreal,

<sup>1</sup> Marquette says that it consisted at this time of seventy-four lodges. These, like the Huron and Iroquois lodges, contained each several fires and several families. This village was about seven miles below the site of the present town of Ottawa.

<sup>2</sup> The journal of Marquette, first published in an imperfect form by Thevenot, in 1681, has been reprinted by Mr. Lenox, under the direction of Mr. Shea, from the manuscript preserved in the archives of the Canadian Jesuits. It will also be found in Shea's *Discovery and Exploration of the Mississippi Valley*, and the *Relations Inédites* of Martin. The true map of Marquette accompanies all these publications. The map published by Thevenot and reproduced by Bancroft is not Marquette's. The original of this, of which I have a fac-simile, bears the title *Carte de la Nouvelle Découverte que les Pères Jésuites ont faite en l'année 1672, et continuée par le Père Jacques Marquette, etc.* The return route of the expedition is incorrectly laid down on it. A manuscript map of the Jesuit Raffeix, preserved in the Bibliothèque Impériale, is more accurate in this particular. I have also another contemporary manuscript map, indicating the various Jesuit stations in the West at this time, and representing the Mississippi, as discovered by Marquette. For these and other maps, see Appendix.

his canoe was upset, two of his men and an Indian boy were drowned, all his papers were lost, and he himself narrowly escaped.<sup>1</sup> In a letter to Frontenac, he speaks of the accident as follows: "I had escaped every peril from the Indians; I had passed forty-two rapids; and was on the point of disembarking, full of joy at the success of so long and difficult an enterprise, when my canoe capsized, after all the danger seemed over. I lost two men and my box of papers, within sight of the first French settlements, which I had left almost two years before. Nothing remains to me but my life, and the ardent desire to employ it on any service which you may please to direct."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Lettre de Frontenac au Ministre, Québec, 14 Nov., 1674.*

<sup>2</sup> This letter is appended to Joliet's smaller map of his discoveries. See Appendix. Compare *Détails sur le Voyage de Louis Joliet* and *Relation de la Descouverte de plusieurs Pays situés au midi de la Nouvelle France, faite en 1673* (Margry, i. 259). These are oral accounts given by Joliet after the loss of his papers. Also, *Lettre de Joliet, Oct. 10, 1674* (Harrisse). On the seventh of October, 1675, Joliet married Claire Bissot, daughter of a wealthy Canadian merchant, engaged in trade with the northern Indians. This drew Joliet's attention to Hudson's Bay; and he made a journey thither in 1679, by way of the Saguenay. He found three English forts on the bay, occupied by about sixty men, who had also an armed vessel of twelve guns and several small trading-craft. The English held out great inducements to Joliet to join them; but he declined, and returned to Quebec, where he reported that unless these formidable rivals were dispossessed, the trade of Canada would be ruined. In consequence of this report, some of the principal merchants of the colony formed a company to compete with the English in the trade of Hudson's Bay. In the year of this journey, Joliet received a grant of the islands of Mignan; and in the following year, 1680, he received another grant, of the great island of Anticosti in the lower St. Lawrence. In 1681 he was established here, with his wife and six servants. He was engaged in fisheries; and, being a skilful

Marquette spent the winter and the following summer at the mission of Green Bay, still suffering from his malady. In the autumn, however, it abated; and he was permitted by his Superior to attempt the execution of a plan to which he was devotedly attached, — the founding, at the principal town of the Illinois, of a mission to be called the “Immaculate Conception,” a name which he had already given to the river Mississippi. He set out on this errand on the twenty-fifth of October, accompanied by two men, named Pierre and Jacques, one of whom had been with him on his great journey of discovery. A band of Pottawattamies and another band of Illinois also joined him. The united parties — ten canoes in all — followed the east shore of Green Bay as far as the inlet then called “Sturgeon Cove,” from the head of which they crossed by a difficult portage through the forest to the shore of Lake Michigan. November had come. The bright hues of the autumn foliage were changed to rusty brown. The shore was desolate, and the lake was stormy. They were more

navigator and surveyor, he made about this time a chart of the St. Lawrence. In 1690, Sir William Phips, on his way with an English fleet to attack Quebec, made a descent on Joliet's establishment, burnt his buildings, and took prisoners his wife and his mother-in-law. In 1694 Joliet explored the coasts of Labrador, under the auspices of a company formed for the whale and seal fishery. On his return, Frontenac made him royal pilot for the St. Lawrence; and at about the same time he received the appointment of hydrographer at Quebec. He died, apparently poor, in 1699 or 1700, and was buried on one of the islands of Mignan. The discovery of the above facts is due in great part to the researches of Margry.

than a month in coasting its western border, when at length they reached the river Chicago, entered it, and ascended about two leagues. Marquette's disease had lately returned, and hemorrhage now ensued. He told his two companions that this journey would be his last. In the condition in which he was, it was impossible to go farther. The two men built a log hut by the river, and here they prepared to spend the winter; while Marquette, feeble as he was, began the spiritual exercises of Saint Ignatius, and confessed his two companions twice a week.

Meadow, marsh, and forest were sheeted with snow, but game was abundant. Pierre and Jacques killed buffalo and deer, and shot wild turkeys close to their hut. There was an encampment of Illinois within two days' journey; and other Indians, passing by this well-known thoroughfare, occasionally visited them, treating the exiles kindly, and sometimes bringing them game and Indian corn. Eighteen leagues distant was the camp of two adventurous French traders, — one of them, a noted *coureur de bois*, nicknamed La Taupine;<sup>1</sup> and the other, a self-styled surgeon. They also visited Marquette, and befriended him to the best of their power.

Urged by a burning desire to lay, before he died, the foundation of his new mission of the Immaculate Conception, Marquette begged his two followers to

<sup>1</sup> Pierre Moreau, *alias* La Taupine, was afterwards bitterly complained of by the Intendant Duchesneau, for acting as the governor's agent in illicit trade with the Indians.

join him in a *novena*, or nine days' devotion to the Virgin. In consequence of this, as he believed, his disease relented; he began to regain strength, and in March was able to resume the journey. On the thirtieth of the month, they left their hut, which had been inundated by a sudden rise of the river, and carried their canoe through mud and water over the portage which led to the Des Plaines. Marquette knew the way, for he had passed by this route on his return from the Mississippi. Amid the rains of opening spring, they floated down the swollen current of the Des Plaines, by naked woods and spongy, saturated prairies, till they reached its junction with the main stream of the Illinois, which they descended to their destination, the Indian town which Marquette calls "Kaskaskia." Here, as we are told, he was received "like an angel from Heaven." He passed from wigwam to wigwam, telling the listening crowds of God and the Virgin, Paradise and Hell, angels and demons; and, when he thought their minds prepared, he summoned them all to a grand council.

It took place near the town, on the great meadow which lies between the river and the modern village of Utica. Here five hundred chiefs and old men were seated in a ring; behind stood fifteen hundred youths and warriors, and behind these again all the women and children of the village. Marquette, standing in the midst, displayed four large pictures of the Virgin; harangued the assembly on the mysteries of the Faith, and exhorted them to adopt it.

The temper of his auditory met his utmost wishes. They begged him to stay among them and continue his instructions; but his life was fast ebbing away, and it behooved him to depart.

A few days after Easter he left the village, escorted by a crowd of Indians, who followed him as far as Lake Michigan. Here he embarked with his two companions. Their destination was Michilimackinac, and their course lay along the eastern borders of the lake. As, in the freshness of advancing spring, Pierre and Jacques urged their canoe along that lonely and savage shore, the priest lay with dimmed sight and prostrated strength, communing with the Virgin and the angels. On the nineteenth of May, he felt that his hour was near; and, as they passed the mouth of a small river, he requested his companions to land. They complied, built a shed of bark on a rising ground near the bank, and carried thither the dying Jesuit. With perfect cheerfulness and composure, he gave directions for his burial, asked their forgiveness for the trouble he had caused them, administered to them the sacrament of penitence, and thanked God that he was permitted to die in the wilderness, a missionary of the Faith and a member of the Jesuit brotherhood. At night, seeing that they were fatigued, he told them to take rest, saying that he would call them when he felt his time approaching. Two or three hours after, they heard a feeble voice, and, hastening to his side, found him at the point of death. He expired calmly, murmur-



ing the names of Jesus and Mary, with his eyes fixed on the crucifix which one of his followers held before him. They dug a grave beside the hut, and here they buried him according to the directions which he had given them; then, re-embarking, they made their way to Michilimackinac, to bear the tidings to the priests at the mission of St. Ignace.<sup>1</sup>

In the winter of 1676, a party of Kiskakon Ottawas were hunting on Lake Michigan; and when, in the following spring, they prepared to return home, they bethought them, in accordance with an Indian custom, of taking with them the bones of Marquette, who had been their instructor at the mission of St. Esprit. They repaired to the spot, found the grave, opened it, washed and dried the bones and placed them carefully in a box of birch-bark. Then, in a procession of thirty canoes, they bore it, singing their funeral songs, to St. Ignace of Michilimackinac. As they approached, priests, Indians, and traders all thronged to the shore. The relics of Marquette were received with solemn ceremony, and buried beneath the floor of the little chapel of the mission.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The contemporary *Relation* tells us that a miracle took place at the burial of Marquette. One of the two Frenchmen, overcome with grief and colic, bethought him of applying a little earth from the grave to the seat of pain. This at once restored him to health and cheerfulness.

<sup>2</sup> For Marquette's death, see the contemporary *Relation*, published by Shea, Lenox, and Martin, with the accompanying *Lettre et Journal*. The river where he died is a small stream in the west of Michigan, some distance south of the promontory called the "Sleeping Bear." It long bore his name, which is now borne by a

larger neighboring stream. Charlevoix's account of Marquette's death is derived from tradition, and is not supported by the contemporary narrative. In 1877, human bones, with fragments of birch-bark, were found buried on the supposed site of the Jesuit chapel at Point St. Ignace.

In 1847, the missionary of the Algonquins at the Lake of Two Mountains, above Montreal, wrote down a tradition of the death of Marquette, from the lips of an old Indian woman, born in 1777, at Michilimackinac. Her ancestress had been baptized by the subject of the story. The tradition has a resemblance to that related as fact by Charlevoix. The old squaw said that the Jesuit was returning, very ill, to Michilimackinac, when a storm forced him and his two men to land near a little river. Here he told them that he should die, and directed them to ring a bell over his grave and plant a cross. They all remained four days at the spot; and, though without food, the men felt no hunger. On the night of the fourth day he died, and the men buried him as he had directed. On waking in the morning, they saw a sack of Indian corn, a quantity of bacon, and some biscuit, miraculously sent to them, in accordance with the promise of Marquette, who had told them that they should have food enough for their journey to Michilimackinac. At the same instant, the stream began to rise, and in a few moments encircled the grave of the Jesuit, which formed, thenceforth, an islet in the waters. The tradition adds, that an Indian battle afterwards took place on the banks of this stream, between Christians and infidels; and that the former gained the victory, in consequence of invoking the name of Marquette. This story bears the attestation of the priest of the Two Mountains that it is a literal translation of the tradition, as recounted by the old woman.

It has been asserted that the Illinois country was visited by two priests, some time before the visit of Marquette. This assertion was first made by M. Noiseux, late Grand Vicar of Quebec, who gives no authority for it. Not the slightest indication of any such visit appears in any contemporary document or map, thus far discovered. The contemporary writers, down to the time of Marquette and La Salle, all speak of the Illinois as an unknown country. The entire groundlessness of Noiseux's assertion is shown by Shea, in a paper in the "Weekly Herald," of New York, April 21, 1855.



## CHAPTER VI.

1673-1678.

### LA SALLE AND FRONTENAC.

OBJECTS OF LA SALLE. — FRONTENAC FAVORS HIM. — PROJECTS OF FRONTENAC. — CATARAQUI. — FRONTENAC ON LAKE ONTARIO. — FORT FRONTENAC. — LA SALLE AND FÉNELON. — SUCCESS OF LA SALLE: HIS ENEMIES.

WE turn from the humble Marquette, thanking God with his last breath that he died for his Order and his Faith; and by our side stands the masculine form of Cavalier de la Salle. Prodigious was the contrast between the two discoverers: the one, with clasped hands and upturned eyes, seems a figure evoked from some dim legend of mediæval saintship; the other, with feet firm planted on the hard earth, breathes the self-relying energies of modern practical enterprise. Nevertheless, La Salle's enemies called him a visionary. His projects perplexed and startled them. At first, they ridiculed him; and then, as step by step he advanced towards his purpose, they denounced and maligned him. What was this purpose? It was not of sudden growth, but developed as years went on. La Salle at La Chine dreamed of a western passage to China, and nursed vague

schemes of western discovery. Then, when his earlier journeyings revealed to him the valley of the Ohio and the fertile plains of Illinois, his imagination took wing over the boundless prairies and forests drained by the great river of the West. His ambition had found its field. He would leave barren and frozen Canada behind, and lead France and civilization into the valley of the Mississippi. Neither the English nor the Jesuits should conquer that rich domain: the one must rest content with the country east of the Alleghanies, and the other with the forests, savages, and beaver-skins of the northern lakes. It was for him to call into light the latent riches of the great West. But the way to his land of promise was rough and long: it lay through Canada, filled with hostile traders and hostile priests, and barred by ice for half the year. The difficulty was soon solved. La Salle became convinced that the Mississippi flowed, not into the Pacific or the Gulf of California, but into the Gulf of Mexico. By a fortified post at its mouth, he could guard it against both English and Spaniards, and secure for the trade of the interior an access and an outlet under his own control, and open at every season. Of this trade, the hides of the buffalo would at first form the staple, and along with furs would reward the enterprise till other resources should be developed.

Such were the vast projects that unfolded themselves in the mind of La Salle. Canada must needs be, at the outset, his base of action, and without the

support of its authorities he could do nothing. This support he found. From the moment when Count Frontenac assumed the government of the colony, he seems to have looked with favor on the young discoverer. There were points of likeness between the two men. Both were ardent, bold, and enterprising. The irascible and fiery pride of the noble found its match in the reserved and seemingly cold pride of the ambitious burgher. Each could comprehend the other; and they had, moreover, strong prejudices and dislikes in common. An understanding, not to say an alliance, soon grew up between them.

Frontenac had come to Canada a ruined man. He was ostentatious, lavish, and in no way disposed to let slip an opportunity of mending his fortune. He presently thought that he had found a plan by which he could serve both the colony and himself. His predecessor, Courcelle, had urged upon the King the expediency of building a fort on Lake Ontario, in order to hold the Iroquois in check and intercept the trade which the tribes of the Upper Lakes had begun to carry on with the Dutch and English of New York. Thus a stream of wealth would be turned into Canada, which would otherwise enrich her enemies. Here, to all appearance, was a great public good, and from the military point of view it was so in fact; but it was clear that the trade thus secured might be made to profit, not the colony at large, but those alone who had control of the fort, which would then become the instrument of a monopoly. This

the governor understood; and, without doubt, he meant that the projected establishment should pay him tribute. How far he and La Salle were acting in concurrence at this time, it is not easy to say; but Frontenac often took counsel of the explorer, who, on his part, saw in the design a possible first step towards the accomplishment of his own far-reaching schemes.

Such of the Canadian merchants as were not in the governor's confidence looked on his plan with extreme distrust. Frontenac, therefore, thought it expedient "to make use," as he expresses it, "of address." He gave out merely that he intended to make a tour through the upper parts of the colony with an armed force, in order to inspire the Indians with respect, and secure a solid peace. He had neither troops, money, munitions, nor means of transportation; yet there was no time to lose, for, should he delay the execution of his plan, it might be countermanded by the King. His only resource, therefore, was in a prompt and hardy exertion of the royal authority; and he issued an order requiring the inhabitants of Quebec, Montreal, Three Rivers, and other settlements to furnish him, at their own cost, as soon as the spring sowing should be over, with a certain number of armed men, besides the requisite canoes. At the same time, he invited the officers settled in the country to join the expedition, — an invitation which, anxious as they were to gain his good graces, few of them cared to decline. Regardless of murmurs and discontent, he pushed his preparation

vigorously, and on the third of June left Quebec with his guard, his staff, a part of the garrison of the Castle of St. Louis, and a number of volunteers. He had already sent to La Salle, who was then at Montreal, directing him to repair to Onondaga, the political centre of the Iroquois, and invite their sachems to meet the governor in council at the Bay of Quinté on the north of Lake Ontario. La Salle had set out on his mission, but first sent Frontenac a map, which convinced him that the best site for his proposed fort was the mouth of the Cataragui, where Kingston now stands. Another messenger was accordingly despatched, to change the rendezvous to this point.

Meanwhile, the governor proceeded at his leisure towards Montreal, stopping by the way to visit the officers settled along the bank, who, eager to pay their homage to the newly risen sun, received him with a hospitality which under the roof of a log hut was sometimes graced by the polished courtesies of the salon and the boudoir. Reaching Montreal, which he had never before seen, he gazed, we may suppose, with some interest at the long row of humble dwellings which lined the bank, the massive buildings of the Seminary, and the spire of the church predominant over all. It was a rude scene, but the greeting that awaited him savored nothing of the rough simplicity of the wilderness. Perrot, the local governor, was on the shore with his soldiers and the inhabitants, drawn up under arms and firing

a salute to welcome the representative of the King. Frontenac was compelled to listen to a long harangue from the judge of the place, followed by another from the syndic. Then there was a solemn procession to the church, where he was forced to undergo a third effort of oratory from one of the priests. *Te Deum* followed, in thanks for his arrival; and then he took refuge in the fort. Here he remained thirteen days, busied with his preparations, organizing the militia, soothing their mutual jealousies, and settling knotty questions of rank and precedence. During this time, every means, as he declares, was used to prevent him from proceeding; and among other devices a rumor was set on foot that a Dutch fleet, having just captured Boston, was on its way to attack Quebec.<sup>1</sup>

Having sent men, canoes, and baggage, by land, to La Salle's old settlement of La Chine, Frontenac himself followed on the twenty-eighth of June. Including Indians from the missions, he now had with him about four hundred men and a hundred and twenty canoes, besides two large flat-boats, which he caused to be painted in red and blue, with strange devices, intended to dazzle the Iroquois by a display of unwonted splendor. Now their hard task began. Shouldering canoes through the forest, dragging the flat-boats along the shore, working like beavers, —

<sup>1</sup> *Lettre de Frontenac à Colbert*, 13 Nov., 1673. This rumor, it appears, originated with the Jesuit Dablon. *Journal du Voyage du Comte de Frontenac au lac Ontario*. The Jesuits were greatly opposed to the establishment of forts and trading-posts in the upper country, for reasons that will appear hereafter.

sometimes in water to the knees, sometimes to the armpits, their feet cut by the sharp stones, and they themselves well-nigh swept down by the furious current, — they fought their way upward against the chain of mighty rapids that break the navigation of the St. Lawrence. The Indians were of the greatest service. Frontenac, like La Salle, showed from the first a special faculty of managing them; for his keen, incisive spirit was exactly to their liking, and they worked for him as they would have worked for no man else. As they approached the Long Saut, rain fell in torrents; and the governor, without his cloak, and drenched to the skin, directed in person the amphibious toil of his followers. Once, it is said, he lay awake all night, in his anxiety lest the biscuit should be wet, which would have ruined the expedition. No such mischance took place, and at length the last rapid was passed, and smooth water awaited them to their journey's end. Soon they reached the Thousand Islands, and their light flotilla glided in long file among those watery labyrinths, by rocky islets, where some lonely pine towered like a mast against the sky; by sun-scorched crags, where the brown lichens crisped in the parching glare; by deep dells, shady and cool, rich in rank ferns, and spongy, dark-green mosses; by still coves, where the water-lilies lay like snow-flakes on their broad, flat leaves, — till at length they neared their goal, and the glistening bosom of Lake Ontario opened on their sight.



Frontenac, to impose respect on the Iroquois, now set his canoes in order of battle. Four divisions formed the first line, then came the two flat-boats; he himself, with his guards, his staff, and the gentlemen volunteers, followed, with the canoes of Three Rivers on his right, and those of the Indians on his left, while two remaining divisions formed a rear line. Thus, with measured paddles, they advanced over the still lake, till they saw a canoe approaching to meet them. It bore several Iroquois chiefs, who told them that the dignitaries of their nation awaited them at Cataraqui, and offered to guide them to the spot. They entered the wide mouth of the river, and passed along the shore, now covered by the quiet little city of Kingston, till they reached the point at present occupied by the barracks, at the western end of Cataraqui bridge. Here they stranded their canoes and disembarked. Baggage was landed, fires lighted, tents pitched, and guards set. Close at hand, under the lee of the forest, were the camping sheds of the Iroquois, who had come to the rendezvous in considerable numbers.

At daybreak of the next morning, the thirteenth of July, the drums beat, and the whole party were drawn up under arms. A double line of men extended from the front of Frontenac's tent to the Indian camp; and, through the lane thus formed, the savage deputies, sixty in number, advanced to the place of council. They could not hide their admiration at the martial array of the French, many of whom were old



soldiers of the regiment of Carignan; and when they reached the tent they ejaculated their astonishment at the uniforms of the governor's guard who surrounded it. Here the ground had been carpeted with the sails of the flat-boats, on which the deputies squatted themselves in a ring and smoked their pipes for a time with their usual air of deliberate gravity; while Frontenac, who sat surrounded by his officers, had full leisure to contemplate the formidable adversaries whose mettle was hereafter to put his own to so severe a test. A chief named Garakontié, a noted friend of the French, at length opened the council, in behalf of all the five Iroquois nations, with expressions of great respect and deference towards "Onontio;" that is to say, the governor of Canada. Whereupon Frontenac, whose native arrogance where Indians were concerned always took a form which imposed respect without exciting anger, replied in the following strain: —

"Children! Mohawks, Oneidas, Onondagas, Cayugas, and Senecas. I am glad to see you here, where I have had a fire lighted for you to smoke by, and for me to talk to you. You have done well, my children, to obey the command of your Father. Take courage: you will hear his word, which is full of peace and tenderness. For do not think that I have come for war. My mind is full of peace, and she walks by my side. Courage, then, children, and take rest."

With that, he gave them six fathoms of tobacco,

reiterated his assurances of friendship, promised that he would be a kind father so long as they should be obedient children, regretted that he was forced to speak through an interpreter, and ended with a gift of guns to the men, and prunes and raisins to their wives and children. Here closed this preliminary meeting, the great council being postponed to another day.

During the meeting, Raudin, Frontenac's engineer, was tracing out the lines of a fort, after a predetermined plan; and the whole party, under the direction of their officers, now set themselves to construct it. Some cut down trees, some dug the trenches, some hewed the palisades; and with such order and alacrity was the work urged on, that the Indians were lost in astonishment. Meanwhile, Frontenac spared no pains to make friends of the chiefs, some of whom he had constantly at his table. He fondled the Iroquois children, and gave them bread and sweetmeats, and in the evening feasted the squaws to make them dance. The Indians were delighted with these attentions, and conceived a high opinion of the new Onontio.

On the seventeenth, when the construction of the fort was well advanced, Frontenac called the chiefs to a grand council, which was held with all possible state and ceremony. His dealing with the Indians on this and other occasions was truly admirable. Unacquainted as he was with them, he seems to have had an instinctive perception of the treatment they required. His predecessors had never ventured to

address the Iroquois as "Children," but had always styled them "Brothers;" and yet the assumption of paternal authority on the part of Frontenac was not only taken in good part, but was received with apparent gratitude. The martial nature of the man, his clear, decisive speech, and his frank and downright manner, backed as they were by a display of force which in their eyes was formidable, struck them with admiration, and gave tenfold effect to his words of kindness. They thanked him for that which from another they would not have endured.

Frontenac began by again expressing his satisfaction that they had obeyed the commands of their Father, and come to Cataraqui to hear what he had to say. Then he exhorted them to embrace Christianity; and on this theme he dwelt at length, in words excellently adapted to produce the desired effect, — words which it would be most superfluous to tax as insincere, though doubtless they lost nothing in emphasis because in this instance conscience and policy aimed alike. Then, changing his tone, he pointed to his officers, his guard, the long files of the militia, and the two flat-boats, mounted with cannon, which lay in the river near by. "If," he said, "your Father can come so far, with so great a force, through such dangerous rapids, merely to make you a visit of pleasure and friendship, what would he do, if you should awaken his anger, and make it necessary for him to punish his disobedient children? He is the arbiter of peace and war.

Beware how you offend him!" And he warned them not to molest the Indian allies of the French, telling them, sharply, that he would chastise them for the least infraction of the peace.

From threats he passed to blandishments, and urged them to confide in his paternal kindness, saying that, in proof of his affection, he was building a storehouse at Cataraqui, where they could be supplied with all the goods they needed, without the necessity of a long and dangerous journey. He warned them against listening to bad men, who might seek to delude them by misrepresentations and falsehoods; and he urged them to give heed to none but "men of character, like the *Sieur de la Salle*." He expressed a hope that they would suffer their children to learn French from the missionaries, in order that they and his nephews — meaning the French colonists — might become one people; and he concluded by requesting them to give him a number of their children to be educated in the French manner, at Quebec.

This speech, every clause of which was reinforced by abundant presents, was extremely well received; though one speaker reminded him that he had forgotten one important point, inasmuch as he had not told them at what prices they could obtain goods at Cataraqui. Frontenac evaded a precise answer, but promised them that the goods should be as cheap as possible, in view of the great difficulty of transportation. As to the request concerning their children, they said that they could not accede to it till they

had talked the matter over in their villages; but it is a striking proof of the influence which Frontenac had gained over them, that, in the following year, they actually sent several of their children to Quebec to be educated, — the girls among the Ursulines, and the boys in the household of the governor.

Three days after the council, the Iroquois set out on their return; and as the palisades of the fort were now finished, and the barracks nearly so, Frontenac began to send his party homeward by detachments. He himself was detained for a time by the arrival of another band of Iroquois, from the villages on the north side of Lake Ontario. He repeated to them the speech he had made to the others; and, this final meeting over, he embarked with his guard, leaving a sufficient number to hold the fort, which was to be provisioned for a year by means of a convoy then on its way up the river. Passing the rapids safely, he reached Montreal on the first of August.

His enterprise had been a complete success. He had gained every point, and, in spite of the dangerous navigation, had not lost a single canoe. Thanks to the enforced and gratuitous assistance of the inhabitants, the whole had cost the King only about ten thousand francs, which Frontenac had advanced on his own credit. Though in a commercial point of view the new establishment was of very questionable benefit to the colony at large, the governor had, nevertheless, conferred an inestimable blessing on all Canada by the assurance he had gained of a long

respite from the fearful scourge of Iroquois hostility. "Assuredly," he writes, "I may boast of having impressed them at once with respect, fear, and goodwill."<sup>1</sup> He adds that the fort at Cataraqui, with the aid of a vessel now building, will command Lake Ontario, keep the peace with the Iroquois, and cut off the trade with the English; and he proceeds to say that by another fort at the mouth of the Niagara, and another vessel on Lake Erie, we, the French, can command all the Upper Lakes. This plan was an essential link in the schemes of La Salle; and we shall soon find him employed in executing it.

A curious incident occurred soon after the building of the fort on Lake Ontario. Frontenac, on his way back, quarrelled with Perrot, the governor of Montreal, whom, in view of his speculations in the fur-trade, he seems to have regarded as a rival in business; but who, by his folly and arrogance, would have justified any reasonable measure of severity. Frontenac, however, was not reasonable. He arrested Perrot, threw him into prison, and set up a man of his own as governor in his place; and as the judge of Montreal was not in his interest, he removed him, and substituted another on whom he could rely. Thus for a time he had Montreal well in hand.

The priests of the Seminary, seigniors of the island, regarded these arbitrary proceedings with extreme uneasiness. They claimed the right of nominating their own governor; and Perrot, though he held a

<sup>1</sup> *Lettre de Frontenac au Ministre*, 13 Nov., 1673.



commission from the King, owed his place to their appointment. True, he had set them at nought, and proved a veritable King Stork; yet nevertheless they regarded his removal as an infringement of their rights.

During the quarrel with Perrot, La Salle chanced to be at Montreal, lodged in the house of Jacques Le Ber, who, though one of the principal merchants and most influential inhabitants of the settlement, was accustomed to sell goods across his counter in person to white men and Indians, his wife taking his place when he was absent. Such were the primitive manners of the secluded little colony. Le Ber, at this time, was in the interest of Frontenac and La Salle; though he afterwards became one of their most determined opponents. Amid the excitement and discussion occasioned by Perrot's arrest, La Salle declared himself an adherent of the governor, and warned all persons against speaking ill of him in his hearing.

The Abbé Fénelon, already mentioned as half-brother to the famous Archbishop, had attempted to mediate between Frontenac and Perrot, and to this end had made a journey to Quebec on the ice, in midwinter. Being of an ardent temperament, and more courageous than prudent, he had spoken somewhat indiscreetly, and had been very roughly treated by the stormy and imperious Count. He returned to Montreal greatly excited, and not without cause. It fell to his lot to preach the Easter sermon. The

service was held in the little church of the Hôtel-Dieu, which was crowded to the porch, all the chief persons of the settlement being present. The curé of the parish, whose name also was Perrot, said High Mass, assisted by La Salle's brother, Cavelier, and two other priests. Then Fénelon mounted the pulpit. Certain passages of his sermon were obviously levelled against Frontenac. Speaking of the duties of those clothed with temporal authority, he said that the magistrate, inspired with the spirit of Christ, was as ready to pardon offences against himself as to punish those against his prince; that he was full of respect for the ministers of the altar, and never maltreated them when they attempted to reconcile enemies and restore peace; that he never made favorites of those who flattered him, nor under specious pretexts oppressed other persons in authority who opposed his enterprises; that he used his power to serve his king, and not to his own advantage; that he remained content with his salary, without disturbing the commerce of the country, or abusing those who refused him a share in their profits; and that he never troubled the people by inordinate and unjust levies of men and material, using the name of his prince as a cover to his own designs.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Faillon, *Colonie Française*, iii. 497, and manuscript authorities there cited. I have examined the principal of these. Faillon himself is a priest of St. Sulpice. Compare H. Verreau, *Les Deux Abbés de Fénelon*, chap. vii.

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La Salle sat near the door; but as the preacher proceeded he suddenly rose to his feet in such a manner as to attract the notice of the congregation. As they turned their heads, he signed to the principal persons among them, and by his angry looks and gesticulation called their attention to the words of Fénelon. Then meeting the eye of the curé, who sat beside the altar, he made the same signs to him, to which the curé replied by a deprecating shrug of the shoulders. Fénelon changed color, but continued his sermon.<sup>1</sup>

This indecent proceeding of La Salle, and the zeal with which throughout the quarrel he took the part of the governor, did not go unrewarded. Henceforth, Frontenac was more than ever his friend; and this plainly appeared in the disposition made, through his influence, of the new fort on Lake Ontario. Attempts had been made to induce the king to have it demolished; but it was resolved at last that, being built, it should be allowed to stand; and, after long delay, a final arrangement was made for its maintenance, in the manner following: In the autumn of 1674, La Salle went to France, with letters of strong recommendation from Frontenac.<sup>2</sup> He was well

<sup>1</sup> *Information faite par nous, Charles le Tardieu, Sieur de Tilly, et Nicolas Dupont, etc., etc., contre le Sr. Abbé de Fénelon.* Tilly and Dupont were sent by Frontenac to inquire into the affair. Among the deponents is La Salle himself.

<sup>2</sup> In his despatch to the minister Colbert, of the fourteenth of November, 1674, Frontenac speaks of La Salle as follows: "I cannot help, Monseigneur, recommending to you the Sieur de la Salle,

received at Court; and he made two petitions to the King,—the one for a patent of nobility, in consideration of his services as an explorer; and the other for a grant in seigniorship of Fort Frontenac, for so he called the new post, in honor of his patron. On his part, he offered to pay back the ten thousand francs which the fort had cost the King; to maintain it at his own charge, with a garrison equal to that of Montreal, besides fifteen or twenty laborers; to form a French colony around it; to build a church, whenever the number of inhabitants should reach one hundred; and, meanwhile, to support one or more Récollet friars; and, finally, to form a settlement of domesticated Indians in the neighborhood. His offers were accepted. He was raised to the rank of the untitled nobles; received a grant of the fort and lands adjacent, to the extent of four leagues in front and half a league in depth, besides the neighboring islands; and was invested with the government of the fort and settlement, subject to the orders of the governor-general.<sup>1</sup>

who is about to go to France, and who is a man of intelligence and ability, more capable than anybody else I know here to accomplish every kind of enterprise and discovery which may be intrusted to him, as he has the most perfect knowledge of the state of the country, as you will see, if you are disposed to give him a few moments of audience."

<sup>1</sup> *Mémoire pour l'entretien du Fort Frontenac, par le Sr. de la Salle, 1674. Pétition du Sr. de la Salle au Roi. Lettres patentes de concession, du Fort de Frontenac et terres adjacentes au profit du Sr. de la Salle; données à Compiègne le 13 Mai, 1675. Arrêt qui accepte les offres faites par Robert Cavelier Sr. de la Salle; à Compiègne le 13*

*La Salle presenting a Petition to Louis XIV.*





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La Salle returned to Canada, proprietor of a seigniority which, all things considered, was one of the most valuable in the colony. His friends and his family, rejoicing in his good fortune and not unwilling to share it, made him large advances of money, enabling him to pay the stipulated sum to the King, to rebuild the fort in stone, maintain soldiers and laborers, and procure in part, at least, the necessary outfit. Had La Salle been a mere merchant, he was in a fair way to make a fortune, for he was in a position to control the better part of the Canadian fur-trade. But he was not a mere merchant; and no commercial profit could content his ambition.

Those may believe, who will, that Frontenac did not expect a share in the profits of the new post. That he did expect it, there is positive evidence; for a deposition is extant, taken at the instance of his enemy the Intendant Duchesneau, in which three witnesses attest that the governor, La Salle, his lieutenant La Forest, and one Boisseau, had formed a partnership to carry on the trade of Fort Frontenac.

No sooner was La Salle installed in his new post than the merchants of Canada joined hands to oppose him. Le Ber, once his friend, became his bitter enemy; for he himself had hoped to share the monopoly of Fort Frontenac, of which he and one Bazire had at first been placed provisionally in con-

*Mai, 1675. Lettres de noblesse pour le Sr. Cavalier de la Salle; données à Compiègne le 13 Mai, 1675. Papiers de Famille. Mémoire au Roi.*

trol, and from which he now saw himself ejected. La Chesnaye, Le Moyne, and others of more or less influence took part in the league, which, in fact, embraced all the traders in the colony except the few joined with Frontenac and La Salle. Duchesneau, intendant of the colony, aided the malcontents. As time went on, their bitterness grew more bitter; and when at last it was seen that, not satisfied with the monopoly of Fort Frontenac, La Salle aimed at the control of the valleys of the Ohio and the Mississippi, and the usufruct of half a continent, the ire of his opponents redoubled, and Canada became for him a nest of hornets, buzzing in wrath and watching the moment to sting. But there was another element of opposition, less noisy, but not less formidable; and this arose from the Jesuits. Frontenac hated them; and they, under befitting forms of duty and courtesy, paid him back in the same coin. Having no love for the governor, they would naturally have little for his partisan and *protégé*; but their opposition had another and a deeper root, for the plans of the daring young schemer jarred with their own.

We have seen the Canadian Jesuits in the early apostolic days of their mission, when the flame of their zeal, fed by an ardent hope, burned bright and high. This hope was doomed to disappointment. Their avowed purpose of building another Paraguay on the borders of the Great Lakes<sup>1</sup> was never accom-

<sup>1</sup> This purpose is several times indicated in the *Relations*. For an instance, see "The Jesuits in North America," i. 245.



plished, and their missions and their converts were swept away in an avalanche of ruin. Still, they would not despair. From the lakes they turned their eyes to the Valley of the Mississippi, in the hope to see it one day the seat of their new empire of the Faith. But what did this new Paraguay mean? It meant a little nation of converted and domesticated savages, docile as children, under the paternal and absolute rule of Jesuit fathers, and trained by them in industrial pursuits, the results of which were to inure, not to the profit of the producers, but to the building of churches, the founding of colleges, the establishment of warehouses and magazines, and the construction of works of defence, — all controlled by Jesuits, and forming a part of the vast possessions of the Order. Such was the old Paraguay;<sup>1</sup> and such, we may suppose, would have been the new, had the plans of those who designed it been realized.

I have said that since the middle of the century the religious exaltation of the early missions had sensibly declined. In the nature of things, that grand enthusiasm was too intense and fervent to be long sustained. But the vital force of Jesuitism had suffered no diminution. That marvellous *esprit de corps*, that extinction of self and absorption of the individual in the Order which has marked the Jesuits from their first existence as a body, was no whit changed or lessened, — a principle, which, though

<sup>1</sup> Compare Charlevoix, *Histoire de Paraguay*, with Robertson, *Letters on Paraguay*.

different, was no less strong than the self-devoted patriotism of Sparta or the early Roman Republic.

The Jesuits were no longer supreme in Canada; or, in other words, Canada was no longer simply a mission. It had become a colony. Temporal interests and the civil power were constantly gaining ground; and the disciples of Loyola felt that relatively, if not absolutely, they were losing it. They struggled vigorously to maintain the ascendancy of their Order, or, as they would have expressed it, the ascendancy of religion; but in the older and more settled parts of the colony it was clear that the day of their undivided rule was past. Therefore, they looked with redoubled solicitude to their missions in the West. They had been among its first explorers; and they hoped that here the Catholic Faith, as represented by Jesuits, might reign with undisputed sway. In Paraguay, it was their constant aim to exclude white men from their missions. It was the same in North America. They dreaded fur-traders, partly because they interfered with their teachings and perverted their converts, and partly for other reasons. But La Salle was a fur-trader, and far worse than a fur-trader: he aimed at occupation, fortification, and settlement. The scope and vigor of his enterprises, and the powerful influence that aided them, made him a stumbling-block in their path. He was their most dangerous rival for the control of the West, and from first to last they set themselves against him.

What manner of man was he who could conceive designs so vast and defy enmities so many and so powerful? And in what spirit did he embrace these designs? We will look hereafter for an answer.

## CHAPTER VII.

1678.

### PARTY STRIFE.

LA SALLE AND HIS REPORTER. — JESUIT ASCENDENCY. — THE MISSIONS AND THE FUR-TRADE. — FEMALE INQUISITORS. — PLOTS AGAINST LA SALLE: HIS BROTHER THE PRIEST. — INTRIGUES OF THE JESUITS. — LA SALLE POISONED: HE EXCULPATES THE JESUITS. — RENEWED INTRIGUES.

ONE of the most curious monuments of La Salle's time is a long memoir, written by a person who made his acquaintance at Paris in the summer of 1678, when, as we shall soon see, he had returned to France in prosecution of his plans. The writer knew the Sulpitian Galinée,<sup>1</sup> who, as he says, had a very high opinion of La Salle; and he was also in close relations with the discoverer's patron, the Prince de Conti.<sup>2</sup> He says that he had ten or twelve interviews with La Salle; and, becoming interested in him and in that which he communicated, he wrote down the substance of his conversation. The paper is divided into two

<sup>1</sup> *Ante*, p. 17.

<sup>2</sup> Louis-Armand de Bourbon, second Prince de Conti. The author of the memoir seems to have been Abbé Renaudot, a learned churchman.

parts: the first, called "Mémoire sur Mr. de la Salle," is devoted to the state of affairs in Canada, and chiefly to the Jesuits; the second, entitled "Histoire de Mr. de la Salle," is an account of the discoverer's life, or as much of it as the writer had learned from him.<sup>1</sup> Both parts bear throughout the internal evidence of being what they profess to be; but they embody the statements of a man of intense partisan feeling, transmitted through the mind of another person in sympathy with him, and evidently sharing his prepossessions. In one respect, however, the paper is of unquestionable historical value; for it gives us a vivid and not an exaggerated picture of the bitter strife of parties which then raged in Canada, and which was destined to tax to the utmost the vast energy and fortitude of La Salle. At times, the memoir is fully sustained by contemporary evidence; but often, again, it rests on its own unsupported authority. I give an abstract of its statements as I find them.

The following is the writer's account of La Salle: "All those among my friends who have seen him find him a man of great intelligence and sense. He rarely speaks of any subject except when questioned about it, and his words are very few and very precise. He distinguishes perfectly between that which he knows with certainty and that which he knows with some mingling of doubt. When he does not know, he does

<sup>1</sup> Extracts from this have already been given in connection with La Salle's supposed discovery of the Mississippi. *Ante*, p. 29.

not hesitate to avow it; and though I have heard him say the same thing more than five or six times, when persons were present who had not heard it before, he always said it in the same manner. In short, I never heard anybody speak whose words carried with them more marks of truth.”<sup>1</sup>

After mentioning that he is thirty-three or thirty-four years old, and that he has been twelve years in America, the memoir declares that he made the following statements: that the Jesuits are masters at Quebec; that the bishop is their creature, and does nothing but in concert with them;<sup>2</sup> that he is not well inclined towards the Récollets,<sup>3</sup> who have little

<sup>1</sup> “Tous ceux de mes amis qui l’ont vu luy trouve beaucoup d’esprit et un très-grand sens; il ne parle guères que des choses sur lesquelles on l’interroge; il les dit en très-peu de mots et très-bien circonstanciées; il distingue parfaitement ce qu’il scait avec certitude, de ce qu’il scait avec quelque mélange de doute. Il avoue sans aucune façon ne pas savoir ce qu’il ne scait pas, et quoyque je luy aye ouy dire plus de cinq ou six fois les mesme choses à l’occasion de quelques personnes qui ne les avaient point encore entendues, je les luy ay toujours ouy dire de la mesme manière. En un mot je n’ay jamais ouy parler personne dont les paroles portassent plus de marques de vérité.”

<sup>2</sup> “Il y a une autre chose qui me déplaît, qui est l’entière dépendance dans laquelle les Prêtres du Séminaire de Québec et le Grand Vicaire de l’Evêque sont pour les Pères Jésuites, car il ne fait pas la moindre chose sans leur ordre; ce qui fait qu’indirectement ils sont les maîtres de ce qui regarde le spirituel, qui, comme vous savez, est une grande machine pour remuer tout le reste.” — *Lettre de Frontenac à Colbert*, 2 Nov., 1672.

<sup>3</sup> “Ces religieux [*les Récollets*] sont fort protégés partout par le comte de Frontenac, gouverneur du pays, et à cause de cela assez maltraités par l’évesque, parceque la doctrine de l’évesque et des Jésuites est que les affaires de la Religion chrestienne n’iront point bien dans ce pays-là que quand le gouverneur sera créature des

credit, but who are protected by Frontenac; that in Canada the Jesuits think everybody an enemy to religion who is an enemy to them; that, though they refused absolution to all who sold brandy to the Indians, they sold it themselves, and that he, La Salle, had himself detected them in it;<sup>1</sup> that the bishop laughs at the orders of the King when they do not agree with the wishes of the Jesuits; that the Jesuits dismissed one of their servants named Robert, because he told of their trade in brandy; that Albanel,<sup>2</sup> in particular, carried on a great fur-trade, and that the Jesuits have built their college in part from the profits of this kind of traffic; that they

Jésuites, ou que l'évesque sera gouverneur." — *Mémoire sur Mr. de la Salle.*

<sup>1</sup> " Ils [*les Jésuites*] refusent l'absolution à ceux qui ne veulent pas promettre de n'en plus vendre [*de l'eau-de-vie*], et s'ils meurent en cet état, ils les privent de la sépulture ecclésiastique; au contraire ils se permettent à eux-mêmes sans aucune difficulté ce mesme trafic quoique toute sorte de trafic soit interdite à tous les ecclésiastiques par les ordonnances du Roy, et par une bulle expresse du Pape. La Bulle et les ordonnances sont notoires, et quoyqu'ils cachent le trafic qu'ils font d'eau-de-vie, M. de la Salle prétend qu'il ne l'est pas moins; qu'outre la notoriété il en a des preuves certaines, et qu'il les a surpris dans ce trafic, et qu'ils luy ont tendu des pièges pour l'y surprendre. . . . Ils ont chassé leur valet Robert à cause qu'il révéla qu'ils en traitaient jour et nuit." — *Ibid.* The writer says that he makes this last statement, not on the authority of La Salle, but on that of a memoir made at the time when the intendant, Talon, with whom he elsewhere says that he was well acquainted, returned to France. A great number of particulars are added respecting the Jesuit trade in furs.

<sup>2</sup> Albanel was prominent among the Jesuit explorers at this time. He is best known by his journey up the Saguenay to Hudson's Bay in 1672.



admitted that they carried on a trade, but denied that they gained so much by it as was commonly supposed.<sup>1</sup>

The memoir proceeds to affirm that they trade largely with the Sioux at Ste. Marie, and with other tribes at Michilimackinac, and that they are masters of the trade of that region, where the forts are in their possession.<sup>2</sup> An Indian said, in full council, at Quebec, that he had prayed and been a Christian as long as the Jesuits would stay and teach him, but since no more beaver were left in his country, the missionaries were gone also. The Jesuits, pursues the memoir, will have no priests but themselves in their missions, and call them all Jansenists, not excepting the priests of St. Sulpice.

The bishop is next accused of harshness and intolerance, as well as of growing rich by tithes, and even by trade, in which it is affirmed he has a covert interest.<sup>3</sup> It is added that there exists in Quebec, under the auspices of the Jesuits, an association

<sup>1</sup> "Pour vous parler franchement, ils [*les Jésuites*] songent autant à la conversion du Castor qu'à celle des âmes." — *Lettre de Frontenac à Colbert*, 2 Nov., 1672.

In his despatch of the next year, he says that the Jesuits ought to content themselves with instructing the Indians in their old missions, instead of neglecting them to make new ones in countries where there are "more beaver-skins to gain than souls to save."

<sup>2</sup> These forts were built by them, and were necessary to the security of their missions.

<sup>3</sup> François Xavier de Laval-Montmorency, first bishop of Quebec, was a prelate of austere character. His memory is cherished in Canada by adherents of the Jesuits and all ultramontane Catholics.



called the Sainte Famille, of which Madame Bourdon<sup>1</sup> is superior. They meet in the cathedral every Thursday, with closed doors, where they relate to each other — as they are bound by a vow to do — all they have learned, whether good or evil, concerning other people, during the week. It is a sort of female inquisition, for the benefit of the Jesuits, the secrets of whose friends, it is said, are kept, while no such discretion is observed with regard to persons not of their party.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This Madame Bourdon was the widow of Bourdon, the engineer (see "The Jesuits in North America," ii. 119). If we may credit the letters of Marie de l'Incarnation, she had married him from a religious motive, in order to charge herself with the care of his motherless children; stipulating in advance that he should live with her, not as a husband, but as a brother. As may be imagined, she was regarded as a most devout and saint-like person.

<sup>2</sup> "Il y a dans Québec une congrégation de femmes et de filles qu'ils [*les Jésuites*] appellent la sainte famille, dans laquelle on fait vœu sur les Saints Evangiles de dire tout ce qu'on sait de bien et de mal des personnes qu'on connoist. La Supérieure de cette compagnie s'appelle Madame Bourdon; une M<sup>de</sup>. d'Ailleboust est, je crois, l'assistante et une M<sup>de</sup>. Charron, la Trésorière. La Compagnie s'assemble tous les Jeudis dans la Cathédrale, à porte fermée, et là elles se disent les unes aux autres tout ce qu'elles ont appris. C'est une espèce d'Inquisition contre toutes les personnes qui ne sont pas unies avec les Jésuites. Ces personnes sont accusées de tenir secret ce qu'elles apprennent de mal des personnes de leur party et de n'avoir pas la mesme discretion pour les autres." — *Mémoire sur Mr. de la Salle*.

The Madame d'Ailleboust mentioned above was a devotee like Madame Bourdon, and, in one respect, her history was similar. See "The Jesuits in North America," ii. 82.

The association of the Sainte Famille was founded by the Jesuit Chaumonot at Montreal in 1663. Laval, Bishop of Quebec, afterwards encouraged its establishment at that place; and, as Chaumonot himself writes, caused it to be attached to the cathedral. *Vie*

Here follow a series of statements which it is needless to repeat, as they do not concern La Salle. They relate to abuse of the confessional, hostility to other priests, hostility to civil authorities, and over-hasty baptisms, in regard to which La Salle is reported to have made a comparison, unfavorable to the Jesuits, between them and the Récollets and Sulpitians.

We now come to the second part of the memoir, entitled "History of Monsieur de la Salle." After stating that he left France at the age of twenty-one or twenty-two, with the purpose of attempting some new discovery, it makes the statements repeated in a former chapter, concerning his discovery of the Ohio, the Illinois, and possibly the Mississippi. It then mentions the building of Fort Frontenac, and says that one object of it was to prevent the Jesuits from becoming undisputed masters of the fur-trade.<sup>1</sup> Three years ago, it pursues, La Salle came to France, and obtained a grant of the fort; and it proceeds to give examples of the means used by the party opposed to him to injure his good name and bring him within reach of the law. Once, when he was at Quebec, the farmer of the King's revenue, one of the richest

*de Chaumonot*, 83. For its establishment at Montreal, see Faillon, *Vie de M<sup>lle</sup>. Mance*, i. 233.

"Ils [*les Jésuites*] ont tous une si grande envie de savoir tout ce qui se fait dans les familles qu'ils ont des Inspecteurs à gages dans la Ville, qui leur rapportent tout ce qui se fait dans les maisons," etc., etc. — *Lettre de Frontenac au Ministre*, 13 Nov., 1673.

<sup>1</sup> Mention has been made (p. 88, *note*) of the report set on foot by the Jesuit Dablon, to prevent the building of the fort.

men in the place, was extremely urgent in his proffers of hospitality, and at length, though he knew La Salle but slightly, persuaded him to lodge in his house. He had been here but a few days when his host's wife began to enact the part of the wife of Potiphar, and this with so much vivacity that on one occasion La Salle was forced to take an abrupt leave, in order to avoid an infringement of the laws of hospitality. As he opened the door, he found the husband on the watch, and saw that it was a plot to entrap him.<sup>1</sup>

Another attack, of a different character, though in the same direction, was soon after made. The remittances which La Salle received from the various members and connections of his family were sent through the hands of his brother, Abbé Cavelier, from whom his enemies were, therefore, very eager to alienate him. To this end, a report was made to reach the priest's ears that La Salle had seduced a young woman, with whom he was living in an open and scandalous manner at Fort Frontenac. The effect of this device exceeded the wishes of its contrivers; for the priest, aghast at what he had heard, set out for the fort, to administer his fraternal rebuke, but on arriving, in place of the expected abomination, found his brother, assisted by two Récollet friars, ruling with edifying propriety over a most exemplary household.

<sup>1</sup> This story is told at considerable length, and the advances of the lady particularly described.

Thus far the memoir. From passages in some of La Salle's letters, it may be gathered that Abbé Cavelier gave him at times no little annoyance. In his double character of priest and elder brother, he seems to have constituted himself the counsellor, monitor, and guide of a man who, though many years his junior, was in all respects incomparably superior to him, as the sequel will show. This must have been almost insufferable to a nature like that of La Salle, who, nevertheless, was forced to arm himself with patience, since his brother held the purse-strings. On one occasion his forbearance was put to a severe proof, when, wishing to marry a damsel of good connections in the colony, Abbé Cavelier saw fit for some reason to interfere, and prevented the alliance.<sup>1</sup>

To resume the memoir. It declares that the Jesuits procured an ordinance from the Supreme Council prohibiting traders from going into the Indian country, in order that they, the Jesuits, being already established there in their missions, might carry on trade without competition. But La Salle induced a good number of the Iroquois to settle around his fort; thus bringing the trade to his own door, without breaking the ordinance. These Iroquois, he is further reported to have said, were very fond of him, and aided him in rebuilding the fort with cut stone. The Jesuits told the Iroquois on the south side of the lake, where they were estab-

<sup>1</sup> Letter of La Salle, in possession of M. Margry.

lished as missionaries, that La Salle was strengthening his defences with the view of making war on them. They and the intendant, who was their creature, endeavored to embroil the Iroquois with the French in order to ruin La Salle; writing to him at the same time that he was the bulwark of the country, and that he ought to be always on his guard. They also tried to persuade Frontenac that it was necessary to raise men and prepare for war. La Salle suspected them; and seeing that the Iroquois, in consequence of their intrigues, were in an excited state, he induced the governor to come to Fort Frontenac to pacify them. He accordingly did so; and a council was held, which ended in a complete restoration of confidence on the part of the Iroquois.<sup>1</sup> At this council they accused the two Jesuits, Bruyas and Pierron,<sup>2</sup> of spreading reports that the French were preparing to attack them. La Salle thought that the

<sup>1</sup> Louis XIV. alludes to this visit, in a letter to Frontenac, dated 28 April, 1677. "I cannot but approve," he writes, "of what you have done, in your voyage to Fort Frontenac, to reconcile the minds of the Five Iroquois Nations, and to clear yourself from the suspicions they had entertained, and from the motives that might induce them to make war." Frontenac's despatches of this year, as well as of the preceding and following years, are missing from the archives.

In a memoir written in November, 1680, La Salle alludes to "le désir que l'on avoit que Monseigneur le Comte de Frontenac fist la guerre aux Iroquois." See Thomassy, *Géologie Pratique de la Louisiane*, 203.

<sup>2</sup> Bruyas was about this time stationed among the Onondagas. Pierron was among the Senecas. He had lately removed to them from the Mohawk country. *Relation des Jésuites*, 1673-79, 140 (Shea). Bruyas was also for a long time among the Mohawks.

object of the intrigue was to make the Iroquois jealous of him, and engage Frontenac in expenses which would offend the King. After La Salle and the governor had lost credit by the rupture, the Jesuits would come forward as pacificators, in the full assurance that they could restore quiet, and appear in the attitude of saviors of the colony.

La Salle, pursues his reporter, went on to say that about this time a quantity of hemlock and verdigris was given him in a salad; and that the guilty person was a man in his employ named Nicolas Perrot, otherwise called Jolycœur, who confessed the crime.<sup>1</sup> The memoir adds that La Salle, who recovered from the effects of the poison, wholly exculpates the Jesuits.

This attempt, which was not, as we shall see, the only one of the kind made against La Salle, is alluded to by him in a letter to a friend at Paris,

<sup>1</sup> This puts the character of Perrot in a new light; for it is not likely that any other can be meant than the famous *voyageur*. I have found no mention elsewhere of the synonyme of Jolycœur. Poisoning was the current crime of the day, and persons of the highest rank had repeatedly been charged with it. The following is the passage:—

“Quoiqu’il en soit, M<sup>r</sup>. de la Salle se sentit quelque temps après empoisonné d’une salade dans laquelle on avoit meslé du ciguë, qui est poison en ce pays là, et du verd de gris. Il en fut malade à l’extrémité, vomissant presque continuellement 40 ou 50 jours après, et il ne réchappa que par la force extrême de sa constitution. Celui qui luy donna le poison fut un nommé Nicolas Perrot, autrement Jolycœur, l’un de ses domestiques. . . . Il pouvoit faire mourir cet homme, qui a confessé son crime, mais il s’est contenté de l’enfermer les fers aux pieds.” — *Histoire de M<sup>r</sup>. de la Salle*.



written in Canada when he was on the point of departure on his great expedition to descend the Mississippi. The following is an extract from it:

“I hope to give myself the honor of sending you a more particular account of this enterprise when it shall have had the success which I hope for it; but I have need of a strong protection for its support. It traverses the commercial operations of certain persons, who will find it hard to endure it. They intended to make a new Paraguay in these parts, and the route which I close against them gave them facilities for an advantageous correspondence with Mexico. This check will infallibly be a mortification to them; and you know how they deal with whatever opposes them. *Nevertheless, I am bound to render them the justice to say that the poison which was given me was not at all of their instigation.* The person who was conscious of the guilt, believing that I was their enemy because he saw that our sentiments were opposed, thought to exculpate himself by accusing them, and I confess that at the time I was not sorry to have this indication of their ill-will; but having afterwards carefully examined the affair, I clearly discovered the falsity of the accusation which this rascal had made against them. I nevertheless pardoned him, in order not to give notoriety to the affair; as the mere suspicion might sully their reputation, to which I should scrupulously avoid doing the slightest injury unless I thought it necessary to the good of the public, and unless the fact were fully proved. Therefore,

Monsieur, if anybody shared the suspicion which I felt, oblige me by undeceiving him.”<sup>1</sup>

This letter, so honorable to La Salle, explains the statement made in the memoir, that, notwithstanding his grounds of complaint against the Jesuits, he continued to live on terms of courtesy with them, entertained them at his fort, and occasionally corresponded with them. The writer asserts, however, that they intrigued with his men to induce them to desert, — employing for this purpose a young man named Deslauriers, whom they sent to him with letters of recommendation. La Salle took him into his service; but he soon after escaped, with several other men, and took refuge in the Jesuit missions.<sup>2</sup> The object of the intrigue is said to have been the reduction of La Salle’s garrison to a number less than that which he was bound to maintain, thus exposing him to a forfeiture of his title of possession.

He is also stated to have declared that Louis Joliet was an impostor,<sup>3</sup> and a *donné* of the Jesuits, — that

<sup>1</sup> The following words are underlined in the original: “*Je suis pourtant obligé de leur rendre une justice, que le poison qu’on m’avoit donné n’étoit point de leur instigation.*” — *Lettre de La Salle au Prince de Conti*, 31 Oct., 1678.

<sup>2</sup> In a letter to the King, Frontenac mentions that several men who had been induced to desert from La Salle had gone to Albany, where the English had received them well. *Lettre de Frontenac au Roy*, 6 Nov., 1679. The Jesuits had a mission in the neighboring tribe of the Mohawks and elsewhere in New York.

<sup>3</sup> This agrees with expressions used by La Salle in a memoir addressed by him to Frontenac in November, 1680. In this, he intimates his belief that Joliet went but little below the mouth of the Illinois, thus doing flagrant injustice to that brave explorer.



is, a man who worked for them without pay; and, further, that when he, La Salle, came to court to ask for privileges enabling him to pursue his discoveries, the Jesuits represented in advance to the minister Colbert that his head was turned, and that he was fit for nothing but a mad-house. It was only by the aid of influential friends that he was at length enabled to gain an audience.

Here ends this remarkable memoir, which, criticise it as we may, does not exaggerate the jealousies and enmities that beset the path of the discoverer.

## CHAPTER VIII.

1677, 1678.

### THE GRAND ENTERPRISE.

LA SALLE AT FORT FRONTENAC. — LA SALLE AT COURT: HIS MEMORIAL. — APPROVAL OF THE KING. — MONEY AND MEANS. — HENRI DE TONTY. — RETURN TO CANADA.

“IF,” writes a friend of La Salle, “he had preferred gain to glory, he had only to stay at his fort, where he was making more than twenty-five thousand livres a year.”<sup>1</sup> He loved solitude and he loved power; and at Fort Frontenac he had both, so far as each consisted with the other. The nearest settlement was a week’s journey distant, and he was master of all around him. He had spared no pains to fulfil the conditions on which his wilderness seigniory had been granted, and within two years he had demolished the original wooden fort, replacing it by another much larger, enclosed on the land side by ramparts and bastions of stone, and on the water side by palisades. It contained a range of barracks of squared timber, a guard-house, a lodging for officers, a forge, a well,

<sup>1</sup> *Mémoire pour Monseigneur le Marquis de Seignelay sur les Découvertes du Sieur de la Salle*, 1682.

a mill, and a bakery. Nine small cannon were mounted on the walls. Two officers and a surgeon, with ten or twelve soldiers, made up the garrison; and three or four times that number of masons, laborers, and canoe-men were at one time maintained at the place.

Along the shore south of the fort was a small village of French families, to whom La Salle had granted farms, and, farther on, a village of Iroquois, whom he had persuaded to settle here. Near these villages were the house and chapel of two Récollet friars, Luc Buisset and Louis Hennepin. More than a hundred French acres of land had been cleared of wood, and planted in part with crops; while cattle, fowls, and swine had been brought up from Montreal. Four vessels, of from twenty-five to forty tons, had been built for the lake and the river; but canoes served best for ordinary uses, and La Salle's followers became so skilled in managing them that they were reputed the best canoe-men in America. Feudal lord of the forests around him, commander of a garrison raised and paid by himself, founder of the mission, and patron of the church, he reigned the autocrat of his lonely little empire.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *État de la dépense faite par Mr. de la Salle, Gouverneur du Fort Frontenac. Récit de Nicolas de la Salle. Reveuue faite au Fort de Frontenac, 1677; Mémoire sur le Projet du Sieur de la Salle* (Margry, i. 329). Plan of Fort Frontenac, published by Faillon, from the original sent to France by Denonville in 1685. *Relation des Découvertes du Sieur de la Salle*. When Frontenac was at the fort in September, 1677, he found only four *habitants*. It appears, by the *Rela-*

It was not solely or chiefly for commercial gain that La Salle had established Fort Frontenac. He regarded it as a first step towards greater things; and now, at length, his plans were ripe and his time was come. In the autumn of 1677 he left the fort in charge of his lieutenant, descended the St. Lawrence to Quebec, and sailed for France. He had the patronage of Frontenac and the help of strong friends in Paris. It is said, as we have seen already, that his enemies denounced him, in advance, as a madman; but a memorial of his, which his friends laid before the minister Colbert, found a favorable hearing. In it he set forth his plans, or a portion of them. He first recounted briefly the discoveries he had made, and then described the country he had seen south and west of the great lakes. "It is nearly all so beautiful and so fertile; so free from forests, and so full of meadows, brooks, and rivers; so abounding in fish, game, and venison, that one can find there in plenty, and with little trouble, all that is needful for the support of flourishing colonies. The soil will produce everything that is raised in France. Flocks and herds can be left out at pasture all winter; and there are even native wild cattle, which, instead of hair, have a fine wool that may answer for making cloth and hats. Their hides are better than those of France, as appears

*tion des Découvertes du Sieur de la Salle, that, three or four years later, there were thirteen or fourteen families. La Salle spent 34,426 francs on the fort. Mémoire au Roy, Papiers de Famille.*

by the sample which the *Sieur de la Salle* has brought with him. Hemp and cotton grow here naturally, and may be manufactured with good results; so there can be no doubt that colonies planted here would become very prosperous. They would be increased by a great number of western Indians, who are in the main of a tractable and social disposition; and as they have the use neither of our weapons nor of our goods, and are not in intercourse with other Europeans, they will readily adapt themselves to us and imitate our way of life as soon as they taste the advantages of our friendship and of the commodities we bring them, insomuch that these countries will infallibly furnish, within a few years, a great many new subjects to the Church and the King.

“It was the knowledge of these things, joined to the poverty of Canada, its dense forests, its barren soil, its harsh climate, and the snow that covers the ground for half the year, that led the *Sieur de la Salle* to undertake the planting of colonies in these beautiful countries of the West.”

Then he recounts the difficulties of the attempt, — the vast distances, the rapids and cataracts that obstruct the way; the cost of men, provisions, and munitions; the danger from the *Iroquois*, and the rivalry of the *English*, who covet the western country, and would gladly seize it for themselves. “But this last reason,” says the memorial, “only animates the *Sieur de la Salle* the more, and impels

him to anticipate them by the promptness of his action."

He declares that it was for this that he had asked for the grant of Fort Frontenac; and he describes what he had done at that post, in order to make it a secure basis for his enterprise. He says that he has now overcome the chief difficulties in his way, and that he is ready to plant a new colony at the outlet of Lake Erie, of which the English, if not prevented, might easily take possession. Towards the accomplishment of his plans, he asks the confirmation of his title to Fort Frontenac, and the permission to establish at his own cost two other posts, with seigniorial rights over all lands which he may discover and colonize within twenty years, and the government of all the country in question. On his part, he proposes to renounce all share in the trade carried on between the tribes of the Upper Lakes and the people of Canada.

La Salle seems to have had an interview with the minister, in which the proposals of his memorial were somewhat modified. He soon received in reply the following patent from the King: —

"Louis, by the grace of God King of France and Navarre, to our dear and well-beloved Robert Cavelier, Sieur de la Salle, greeting. We have received with favor the very humble petition made us in your name, to permit you to labor at the discovery of the western parts of New France; and we have the more willingly entertained this proposal,

since we have nothing more at heart than the exploration of this country, through which, to all appearance, a way may be found to Mexico. . . . For this and other causes thereunto moving us, we permit you by these presents, signed with our hand, to labor at the discovery of the western parts of our aforesaid country of New France; and, for the execution of this enterprise, to build forts at such places as you may think necessary, and enjoy possession thereof under the same clauses and conditions as of Fort Frontenac, conformably to our letters patent of May thirteenth, 1675, which, so far as needful, we confirm by these presents. And it is our will that they be executed according to their form and tenor: on condition, nevertheless, that you finish this enterprise within five years, failing which, these presents shall be void, and of no effect; that you carry on no trade with the savages called Ottawas, or with other tribes who bring their peltries to Montreal; and that you do the whole at your own cost and that of your associates, to whom we have granted the sole right of trade in buffalo-hides. And we direct the Sieur Count Frontenac, our governor and lieutenant-general, and also Duchesneau, intendant of justice, police, and finance, and the officers of the supreme council of the aforesaid country, to see to the execution of these presents; for such is our pleasure.

“Given at St. Germain en Laye, this 12th day of May, 1678, and of our reign the 35th year.”

This patent grants both more and less than the



memorial had asked. It authorizes La Salle to build and own, not two forts only, but as many as he may see fit, provided that he do so within five years; and it gives him, besides, the monopoly of buffalo-hides, for which at first he had not petitioned. Nothing is said of colonies. To discover the country, secure it by forts, and find, if possible, a way to Mexico, are the only object set forth; for Louis XIV. always discountenanced settlement in the West, partly as tending to deplete Canada, and partly as removing his subjects too far from his paternal control. It was but the year before that he refused to Louis Joliet the permission to plant a trading station in the Valley of the Mississippi.<sup>1</sup> La Salle, however, still held to his plan of a commercial and industrial colony, and in connection with it to another purpose, of which his memorial had made no mention. This was the building of a vessel on some branch of the Mississippi, in order to sail down that river to its mouth, and open a route to commerce through the Gulf of Mexico. It is evident that this design was already formed; for he had no sooner received his patent, than he engaged ship-carpenters, and procured iron, cordage, and anchors, not for one vessel, but for two.

What he now most needed was money; and having none of his own, he set himself to raising it from others. A notary named Simonnet lent him four thousand livres; an advocate named Raoul, twenty-

<sup>1</sup> *Colbert à Duchesneau, 28 Avril, 1677.*



four thousand; and one Dumont, six thousand. His cousin François Plet, a merchant of Rue St. Martin, lent him about eleven thousand, at the interest of forty per cent; and when he returned to Canada, Frontenac found means to procure him another loan of about fourteen thousand, secured by the mortgage of Fort Frontenac. But his chief helpers were his family, who became sharers in his undertaking. "His brothers and relations," says a memorial afterwards addressed by them to the King, "spared nothing to enable him to respond worthily to the royal goodness;" and the document adds, that, before his allotted five years were ended, his discoveries had cost them more than five hundred thousand livres (francs).<sup>1</sup> La Salle himself believed, and made others believe, that there was more profit than risk in his schemes.

Lodged rather obscurely in Rue de la Truanderie, and of a nature reserved and shy, he nevertheless found countenance and support from personages no less exalted than Colbert, Seignelay, and the Prince de Conti. Others, too, in stations less conspicuous, warmly espoused his cause, and none more so than the learned Abbé Renaudot, who helped him with tongue and pen, and seems to have been instrumental in introducing to him a man who afterwards proved invaluable. This was Henri de Tonty, an Italian

<sup>1</sup> *Mémoire au Roy, présenté sous la Régence; Obligation du Sieur de la Salle envers le Sieur Plet; Autres Emprunts de Cavelier de la Salle* (Margry, i. 423-432).

officer, a *protégé* of the Prince de Conti, who sent him to La Salle as a person suited to his purposes. Tonty had but one hand, the other having been blown off by a grenade in the Sicilian wars.<sup>1</sup> His father, who had been governor of Gaeta, but who had come to France in consequence of political disturbances in Naples, had earned no small reputation as a financier, and had invented the form of life insurance still called the Tontine. La Salle learned to know his new lieutenant on the voyage across the Atlantic; and, soon after reaching Canada, he wrote of him to his patron in the following terms: "His honorable character and his amiable disposition were well known to you; but perhaps you would not have thought him capable of doing things for which a strong constitution, an acquaintance with the country, and the use of both hands seemed absolutely necessary. Nevertheless, his energy and address make him equal to anything; and now, at a season when everybody is in fear of the ice, he is setting out to begin a new fort, two hundred leagues from this place, and to which I have taken the liberty to give the name of Fort Conti. It is situated near that great cataract, more than a hundred and twenty *toises* in height, by which the lakes of higher elevation precipitate themselves into Lake Frontenac [Ontario]. From there one goes by water, five hundred leagues, to the place where Fort Dauphin is to be begun; from which it only remains to descend the great

<sup>1</sup> Tonty, *Mémoire*, in Margry, *Relations et Mémoires inédits*, 5.

river of the Bay of St. Esprit, to reach the Gulf of Mexico.”<sup>1</sup>

Besides Tonty, La Salle found in France another ally, La Motte de Lussière, to whom he offered a share in the enterprise, and who joined him at Rochelle, the place of embarkation. Here vexatious delays occurred. Bellinzani, director of trade, who had formerly taken lessons in rascality in the service of Cardinal Mazarin, abused his official position to throw obstacles in the way of La Salle, in order to extort money from him; and he extorted, in fact, a considerable sum, which his victim afterwards reclaimed. It was not till the fourteenth of July that La Salle, with Tonty, La Motte, and thirty men, set sail for Canada, and two months more elapsed before he reached Quebec. Here, to increase his resources and strengthen his position, he seems to have made a league with several Canadian mer-

<sup>1</sup> *Lettre de La Salle*, 31 Oct., 1678. Fort Conti was to have been built on the site of the present Fort Niagara. The name of Lac de Conti was given by La Salle to Lake Erie. The fort mentioned as Fort Dauphin was built, as we shall see, on the Illinois, though under another name. La Salle, deceived by Spanish maps, thought that the Mississippi discharged itself into the Bay of St. Esprit (Mobile Bay).

Henri de Tonty signed his name in the Gallicized, and not in the original Italian form *Tonti*. He wore a hand of iron or some other metal, which was usually covered with a glove. La Potherie says that he once or twice used it to good purpose when the Indians became disorderly, in breaking the heads of the most contumacious or knocking out their teeth. Not knowing at the time the secret of the unusual efficacy of his blows, they regarded him as a “medicine” of the first order. La Potherie erroneously ascribes the loss of his hand to a sabre-cut received in a *sortie* at Messina.

chants, some of whom had before been his enemies, and were to be so again. Here, too, he found Father Louis Hennepin, who had come down from Fort Frontenac to meet him.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *La Motte de Lussière à —, sans date; Mémoire de la Salle sur les Extorsions commises par Bellinzani; Société formée par La Salle; Relation de Henri de Tonty, 1684* (Margry, i. 338, 573; ii. 7, 25).

## CHAPTER IX.

1678-1679.

### LA SALLE AT NIAGARA.

FATHER LOUIS HENNEPIN: HIS PAST LIFE; HIS CHARACTER.— EMBARKATION. — NIAGARA FALLS. — INDIAN JEALOUSY. — LA MOTTE AND THE SENECAS. — A DISASTER. — LA SALLE AND HIS FOLLOWERS.

HENNEPIN was all eagerness to join in the adventure; and, to his great satisfaction, La Salle gave him a letter from his Provincial, Father Le Fèvre, containing the coveted permission. Whereupon, to prepare himself, he went into retreat at the Récollet convent of Quebec, where he remained for a time in such prayer and meditation as his nature, the reverse of spiritual, would permit. Frontenac, always partial to his Order, then invited him to dine at the château; and having visited the bishop and asked his blessing, he went down to the Lower Town and embarked. His vessel was a small birch canoe, paddled by two men. With sandalled feet, a coarse gray capote, and peaked hood, the cord of St. Francis about his waist, and a rosary and crucifix hanging at his side, the father set forth on his memorable journey. He

carried with him the furniture of a portable altar, which in time of need he could strap on his back like a knapsack.

He slowly made his way up the St. Lawrence, stopping here and there, where a clearing and a few log houses marked the feeble beginning of a parish and a seigniory. The settlers, though good Catholics, were too few and too poor to support a priest, and hailed the arrival of the friar with delight. He said mass, exhorted a little, as was his custom, and on one occasion baptized a child. At length he reached Montreal, where the enemies of the enterprise enticed away his two canoe-men. He succeeded in finding two others, with whom he continued his voyage, passed the rapids of the upper St. Lawrence, and reached Fort Frontenac at eleven o'clock at night of the second of November, where his brethren of the mission, Ribourde and Buisset, received him with open arms.<sup>1</sup> La Motte, with most of the men, appeared on the eighth; but La Salle and Tonty did not arrive till more than a month later. Meanwhile, in pursuance of his orders, fifteen men set out in canoes for Lake Michigan and the Illinois, to trade with the Indians and collect provisions, while La Motte embarked in a small vessel for Niagara, accompanied by Hennepin.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Hennepin, *Description de la Louisiane* (1683), 19; *Ibid.*, *Voyage Curieux* (1704), 66. Ribourde had lately arrived.

<sup>2</sup> *Lettre de La Motte de la Lussière, sans date; Relation de Henri de Tonty écrite de Québec, le 14 Novembre, 1684* (Margry, i. 573).



*Father Hennepin celebrating Mass.*







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This bold, hardy, and adventurous friar, the historian of the expedition, and a conspicuous actor in it, has unwittingly painted his own portrait with tolerable distinctness. "I always," he says, "felt a strong inclination to fly from the world and live according to the rules of a pure and severe virtue; and it was with this view that I entered the Order of St. Francis."<sup>1</sup> He then speaks of his zeal for the saving of souls, but admits that a passion for travel and a burning desire to visit strange lands had no small part in his inclination for the missions.<sup>2</sup> Being in a convent in Artois, his Superior sent him to Calais, at the season of the herring-fishery, to beg alms, after the practice of the Franciscans. Here and at Dunkirk he made friends of the sailors, and was never tired of their stories. So insatiable, indeed, was his appetite for them, that "often," he says, "I hid myself behind tavern doors while the sailors were telling of their voyages. The tobacco smoke made me very sick at the stomach; but, notwithstanding, I listened attentively to all they said about their adventures at sea and their travels in distant countries. I could have passed whole days and nights in this way without eating."<sup>3</sup>

He presently set out on a roving mission through

This paper, apparently addressed to Abbé Renaudot, is entirely distinct from Tonty's memoir of 1693, addressed to the minister Ponchartrain.

<sup>1</sup> Hennepin, *Nouvelle Découverte* (1697), 8.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., *Avant Propos*, 5.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., *Voyage Curieux* (1704), 12.

Holland; and he recounts various mishaps which befell him, "in consequence of my zeal in laboring for the saving of souls." "I was at the bloody fight of Seneff," he pursues, "where so many perished by fire and sword, and where I had abundance of work in comforting and consoling the poor wounded soldiers. After undergoing great fatigues, and running extreme danger in the sieges of towns, in the trenches, and in battles, where I exposed myself freely for the salvation of others while the soldiers were breathing nothing but blood and carnage, I found myself at last in a way of satisfying my old inclination for travel."<sup>1</sup>

He got leave from his superiors to go to Canada, the most adventurous of all the missions, and accordingly sailed in 1675, in the ship which carried La Salle, who had just obtained the grant of Fort Frontenac. In the course of the voyage, he took it upon him to reprove a party of girls who were amusing themselves and a circle of officers and other passengers by dancing on deck. La Salle, who was among the spectators, was annoyed at Hennepin's interference, and told him that he was behaving like a pedagogue. The friar retorted, by alluding — unconsciously, as he says — to the circumstance that La Salle was once a pedagogue himself, having, according to Hennepin, been for ten or twelve years teacher of a class in a Jesuit school. La Salle, he adds, turned pale with rage, and never forgave him

<sup>1</sup> Hennepin, *Voyage Curieux* (1704), 13.

to his dying day, but always maligned and persecuted him.<sup>1</sup>

On arriving in Canada, he was sent up to Fort Frontenac, as a missionary. That wild and remote post was greatly to his liking. He planted a gigantic cross, superintended the building of a chapel for himself and his colleague Buisset, and instructed the Iroquois colonists of the place. He visited, too, the neighboring Indian settlements, — paddling his canoe in summer, when the lake was open, and journeying in winter on snow-shoes, with a blanket slung at his back. His most noteworthy journey was one which he made in the winter, — apparently of 1677, — with a soldier of the fort. They crossed the eastern extremity of Lake Ontario on snow-shoes, and pushed southward through the forests, towards Onondaga, — stopping at evening to dig away the snow, which was several feet deep, and collect wood for their fire, which they were forced to replenish repeatedly during the night, to keep themselves from freezing. At length, they reached the great Onondaga town, where the Indians were much amazed at their hardihood. Thence they proceeded eastward to the Oneidas, and afterwards to the Mohawks, who regaled them with small frogs, pounded up with a porridge of Indian corn. Here Hennepin found the Jesuit Bruyas, who permitted him to copy a diction-

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., *Avis au Lecteur*. He elsewhere represents himself as on excellent terms with La Salle; with whom, he says, he used to read histories of travels at Fort Frontenac, after which they discussed together their plans of discovery.

ary of the Mohawk language<sup>1</sup> which he had compiled; and here he presently met three Dutchmen, who urged him to visit the neighboring settlement of Orange, or Albany, — an invitation which he seems to have declined.<sup>2</sup>

They were pleased with him, he says, because he spoke Dutch. Bidding them farewell, he tied on his snow-shoes again, and returned with his companion to Fort Frontenac. Thus he inured himself to the hardships of the woods, and prepared for the execution of the grand plan of discovery which he calls his own, — “an enterprise,” to borrow his own words, “capable of terrifying anybody but me.”<sup>3</sup> When the later editions of his book appeared, doubts had been expressed of his veracity. “I here protest to you, before God,” he writes, addressing the reader, “that my narrative is faithful and sincere, and that you may believe everything related in it.”<sup>4</sup> And yet, as we shall see, this reverend father was the most impudent of liars; and the narrative of which he speaks is a rare monument of brazen mendacity. Hennepin, however, had seen and dared much; for

<sup>1</sup> This was the *Racines Agnières* of Bruyas. It was published by Mr. Shea in 1862. Hennepin seems to have studied it carefully; for on several occasions he makes use of words evidently borrowed from it, putting them into the mouths of Indians speaking a dialect different from that of the Agniers, or Mohawks.

<sup>2</sup> Compare Brodhead in *Hist. Mag.*, x. 268.

<sup>3</sup> “Une entreprise capable d’épouvanter tout autre que moi.” — Hennepin, *Voyage Curieux, Avant Propos* (1704).

<sup>4</sup> “Je vous proteste ici devant Dieu, que ma Relation est fidèle et sincère,” etc. — *Ibid.*, *Avis au Lecteur*.



among his many failings fear had no part, and where his vanity or his spite was not involved, he often told the truth. His books have their value, with all their enormous fabrications.<sup>1</sup>

La Motte and Hennepin, with sixteen men, went on board the little vessel of ten tons, which lay at Fort Frontenac. The friar's two brethren, Buisset and Ribourde, threw their arms about his neck as they bade him farewell; while his Indian proselytes, learning whither he was bound, stood with their hands pressed upon their mouths, in amazement at the perils which awaited their ghostly instructor. La Salle, with the rest of the party, was to follow as soon as he could finish his preparations. It was a boisterous and gusty day, the eighteenth of November. The sails were spread; the shore receded, — the stone walls of the fort, the huge cross that the friar had reared, the wigwams, the settlers' cabins, the group of staring Indians on the strand. The lake was rough; and the men, crowded in so small a craft, grew nervous and uneasy. They hugged the northern shore, to escape the fury of the wind, which blew savagely from the northeast; while the long gray sweep of naked forests on their right betokened that winter was fast closing in. On the twenty-sixth, they reached the neighborhood of the Indian town of

<sup>1</sup> The nature of these fabrications will be shown hereafter. They occur, not in the early editions of Hennepin's narrative, which are comparatively truthful, but in the edition of 1697 and those which followed. La Salle was dead at the time of their publication.

Taiaiaagon,<sup>1</sup> not far from Toronto, and ran their vessel, for safety, into the mouth of a river, — probably the Humber, — where the ice closed about her, and they were forced to cut her out with axes. On the fifth of December, they attempted to cross to the mouth of the Niagara; but darkness overtook them, and they spent a comfortless night, tossing on the troubled lake, five or six miles from shore. In the morning, they entered the mouth of the Niagara, and landed on the point at its eastern side, where now stand the historic ramparts of Fort Niagara. Here they found a small village of Senecas, attracted hither by the fisheries, who gazed with curious eyes at the vessel, and listened in wonder as the voyagers sang *Te Deum* in gratitude for their safe arrival.

Hennepin, with several others, now ascended the river in a canoe to the foot of the mountain ridge of Lewiston, which, stretching on the right hand and on the left, forms the acclivity of a vast plateau, rent with the mighty chasm, along which, from this point to the cataract, seven miles above, rush, with the fury of an Alpine torrent, the gathered waters of four inland oceans. To urge the canoe farther was impossible. He landed, with his companions, on the west bank, near the foot of that part of the ridge now called Queenstown Heights, climbed the steep ascent, and pushed through the wintry forest on a

<sup>1</sup> This place is laid down on a manuscript map sent to France by the Intendant Duchesneau, and now preserved in the Archives de la Marine, and also on several other contemporary maps.



tour of exploration. On his left sank the cliffs, the furious river raging below; till at length, in primeval solitudes unprofaned as yet by the pettiness of man, the imperial cataract burst upon his sight.<sup>1</sup>

The explorers passed three miles beyond it, and encamped for the night on the banks of Chippewa Creek, scraping away the snow, which was a foot deep, in order to kindle a fire. In the morning they retraced their steps, startling a number of deer and wild turkeys on their way, and rejoined their companions at the mouth of the river.

<sup>1</sup> Hennepin's account of the falls and river of Niagara—especially his second account, on his return from the West—is very minute, and on the whole very accurate. He indulges in gross exaggeration as to the height of the cataract, which, in the edition of 1683, he states at five hundred feet, and raises to six hundred in that of 1697. He also says that there was room for four carriages to pass abreast under the American Fall without being wet. This is, of course, an exaggeration at the best; but it is extremely probable that a great change has taken place since his time. He speaks of a small lateral fall at the west side of the Horse Shoe Fall which does not now exist. Table Rock, now destroyed, is distinctly figured in his picture. He says that he descended the cliffs on the west side to the foot of the cataract, but that no human being can get down on the east side.

The name of Niagara, written *Onguiaahra* by Lalemant in 1641, and *Ongiara* by Sanson, on his map of 1657, is used by Hennepin in its present form. His description of the falls is the earliest known to exist. They are clearly indicated on the map of Champlain, 1632. For early references to them, see "The Jesuits in North America," i. 235, *note*. A brief but curious notice of them is given by Gendron, *Quelques Particularitez du Pays des Hurons*, 1659. The indefatigable Dr. O'Callaghan has discovered thirty-nine distinct forms of the name Niagara. *Index to Colonial Documents of New York*, 465. It is of Iroquois origin, and in the Mohawk dialect is pronounced Nyàgarah.

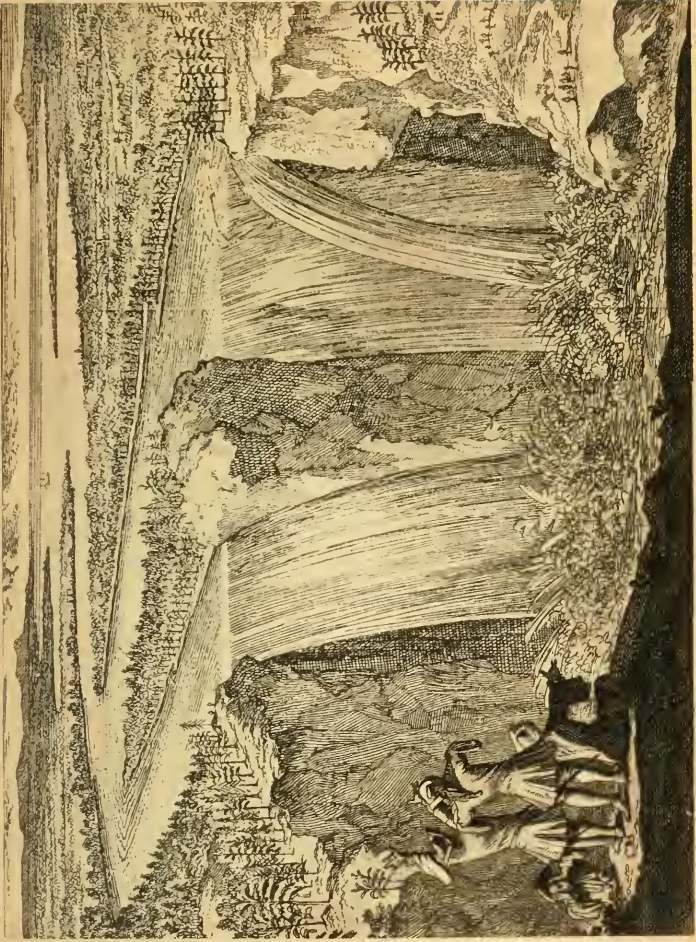
La Motte now began the building of a fortified house, some two leagues above the mouth of the Niagara.<sup>1</sup> Hot water was used to soften the frozen ground; but frost was not the only obstacle. The Senecas of the neighboring village betrayed a sullen jealousy at a design which, indeed, boded them no good. Niagara was the key to the four great lakes above; and whoever held possession of it could, in no small measure, control the fur-trade of the interior. Occupied by the French, it would in time of peace intercept the trade which the Iroquois carried on between the western Indians and the Dutch and English at Albany, and in time of war threaten them with serious danger. La Motte saw the necessity of conciliating these formidable neighbors, and, if possible, cajoling them to give their consent to the plan. La Salle, indeed, had instructed him to that effect. He resolved on a journey to the great village of the Senecas, and called on Hennepin, who was busied in building a bark chapel for himself, to accompany him. They accordingly set out with several men well armed and equipped, and bearing at their backs presents of very considerable value. The village was beyond the Genesee, southeast of the site of Rochester.<sup>2</sup> After a march of five days, they reached it on the last day of December. They were con-

<sup>1</sup> Tonty, *Relation*, 1684 (Margry, i. 573).

<sup>2</sup> Near the town of Victor. It is laid down on the map of Galinée, and other unpublished maps. Compare Marshall, *Historical Sketches of the Niagara Frontier*, 14.

*First Picture of Niagara, 1683.*







ducted to the lodge of the great chief, where they were beset by a staring crowd of women and children. Two Jesuits, Raffeix and Julien Garnier, were in the village; and their presence boded no good for the embassy. La Motte, who seems to have had little love for priests of any kind, was greatly annoyed at seeing them; and when the chiefs assembled to hear what he had to say, he insisted that the two fathers should leave the council-house. At this, Hennepin, out of respect for his cloth, thought it befitting that he should retire also. The chiefs, forty-two in number, squatted on the ground, arrayed in ceremonial robes of beaver, wolf, or black-squirrel skin. "The senators of Venice," writes Hennepin, "do not look more grave or speak more deliberately than the counsellors of the Iroquois." La Motte's interpreter harangued the attentive conclave, placed gift after gift at their feet, — coats, scarlet cloth, hatchets, knives, and beads, — and used all his eloquence to persuade them that the building of a fort on the banks of the Niagara, and a vessel on Lake Erie, were measures vital to their interest. They gladly took the gifts, but answered the interpreter's speech with evasive generalities; and having been entertained with the burning of an Indian prisoner, the discomfited embassy returned, half-famished, to Niagara.

Meanwhile, La Salle and Tonty were on their way from Fort Frontenac, with men and supplies, to join La Motte and his advance party. They were



in a small vessel, with a pilot either unskilful or treacherous. On Christmas eve, he was near wrecking them off the Bay of Quinté. On the next day they crossed to the mouth of the Genesee; and La Salle, after some delay, proceeded to the neighboring town of the Senecas, where he appears to have arrived just after the departure of La Motte and Hennepin. He, too, called them to a council, and tried to soothe the extreme jealousy with which they regarded his proceedings. "I told them my plan," he says, "and gave the best pretexts I could, and I succeeded in my attempt."<sup>1</sup> More fortunate than La Motte, he persuaded them to consent to his carrying arms and ammunition by the Niagara portage, building a vessel above the cataract, and establishing a fortified warehouse at the mouth of the river.

This success was followed by a calamity. La Salle had gone up the Niagara to find a suitable place for a ship-yard, when he learned that the pilot in charge of the vessel he had left had disobeyed his orders, and ended by wrecking it on the coast. Little was saved except the anchors and cables destined for the new vessel to be built above the cataract. This loss threw him into extreme perplexity, and, as Hennepin says, "would have made anybody but him give up the enterprise."<sup>2</sup> The whole party were now gath-

<sup>1</sup> *Lettre de La Salle à un de ses associés* (Margry, ii. 32).

<sup>2</sup> *Description de la Louisiane* (1683), 41. It is characteristic of Hennepin that, in the editions of his book published after La Salle's death, he substitutes, for "anybody but him," "anybody but those who had formed so generous a design," — meaning to include him-



ered at the palisaded house which La Motte had built, a little below the mountain ridge of Lewiston. They were a motley crew of French, Flemings, and Italians, all mutually jealous. La Salle's enemies had tampered with some of the men; and none of them seemed to have had much heart for the enterprise. The fidelity even of La Motte was doubtful. "He served me very ill," says La Salle; "and Messieurs de Tonty and de la Forest knew that he did his best to debauch all my men."<sup>1</sup> His health soon failed under the hardships of these winter journeyings, and he returned to Fort Frontenac, half-blinded by an inflammation of the eyes.<sup>2</sup> La Salle, seldom happy in the choice of subordinates, had, perhaps, in all his company but one man whom he could fully trust; and this was Tonty. He and Hennepin were on indifferent terms. Men thrown together in a rugged enterprise like this quickly learn to know each other; and the vain and assuming friar was not likely to commend himself to La Salle's brave and loyal lieutenant. Hennepin says that it was La Salle's policy to govern through the dissensions of his followers; and, from whatever cause, it is certain that those beneath him were rarely in perfect harmony.

self, though he lost nothing by the disaster, and had not formed the design.

On these incidents, compare the two narratives of Tonty, of 1684 and 1693. The book bearing Tonty's name is a compilation full of errors. He disowned its authorship.

<sup>1</sup> *Lettre de La Salle*, 22 Août, 1682 (Margry, ii. 212).

<sup>2</sup> *Lettre de La Motte*, sans date

## CHAPTER X.

1679.

### THE LAUNCH OF THE "GRIFFIN."

THE NIAGARA PORTAGE. — A VESSEL ON THE STOCKS. — SUFFERING AND DISCONTENT. — LA SALLE'S WINTER JOURNEY. — THE VESSEL LAUNCHED. — FRESH DISASTERS.

A MORE important work than that of the warehouse at the mouth of the river was now to be begun. This was the building of a vessel above the cataract. The small craft which had brought La Motte and Hennepin with their advance party had been hauled to the foot of the rapids at Lewiston, and drawn ashore with a capstan, to save her from the drifting ice. Her lading was taken out, and must now be carried beyond the cataract to the calm water above. The distance to the destined point was at least twelve miles, and the steep heights above Lewiston must first be climbed. This heavy task was accomplished on the twenty-second of January. The level of the plateau was reached, and the file of burdened men, some thirty in number, toiled slowly on its way over the snowy plains and through the gloomy forests of spruce and naked oak-trees; while Hennepin plodded through the drifts with his portable altar

lashed fast to his back. They came at last to the mouth of a stream which entered the Niagara two leagues above the cataract, and which was undoubtedly that now called Cayuga Creek.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It has been a matter of debate on which side of the Niagara the first vessel on the Upper Lakes was built. A close study of Hennepin, and a careful examination of the localities, have convinced me that the spot was that indicated above. Hennepin repeatedly alludes to a large detached rock, rising out of the water at the foot of the rapids above Lewiston, on the west side of the river. This rock may still be seen immediately under the western end of the Lewiston suspension-bridge. Persons living in the neighborhood remember that a ferry-boat used to pass between it and the cliffs of the western shore; but it has since been undermined by the current and has inclined in that direction, so that a considerable part of it is submerged, while the gravel and earth thrown down from the cliff during the building of the bridge has filled the intervening channel. Opposite to this rock, and on the east side of the river, says Hennepin, are three mountains, about two leagues below the cataract. (*Nouveau Voyage* (1704), 462, 466.) To these "three mountains," as well as to the rock, he frequently alludes. They are also spoken of by La Hontan, who clearly indicates their position. They consist in the three successive grades of the acclivity: first, that which rises from the level of the water, forming the steep and lofty river-bank; next, an intermediate ascent, crowned by a sort of terrace, where the tired men could find a second resting-place and lay down their burdens, whence a third effort carried them with difficulty to the level top of the plateau. That this was the actual "portage," or carrying place of the travellers, is shown by Hennepin (1704), 114, who describes the carrying of anchors and other heavy articles up these heights in August, 1679. La Hontan also passed the Falls by way of the "three mountains" eight years later. La Hontan (1703), 106. It is clear, then, that the portage was on the east side, whence it would be safe to conclude that the vessel was built on the same side. Hennepin says that she was built at the mouth of a stream (*rivière*) entering the Niagara two leagues above the Falls. Excepting one or two small brooks, there is no stream on the west side but Chippewa Creek, which Hennepin had visited and correctly placed at about a league from the cataract. His dis-

Trees were felled, the place cleared, and the master-carpenter set his ship-builders at work. Meanwhile, two Mohegan hunters, attached to the party, made bark wigwams to lodge the men. Hennepin had his chapel, apparently of the same material, where he placed his altar, and on Sundays and saints' days said mass, preached, and exhorted; while some of the men, who knew the Gregorian chant, lent their aid at the service. When the carpenters were ready to lay the keel of the vessel, La Salle asked the friar to drive the first bolt; "but the modesty of my religious profession," he says, "compelled me to decline this honor."

Fortunately, it was the hunting-season of the Iroquois, and most of the Seneca warriors were in the forests south of Lake Erie; yet enough remained to cause serious uneasiness. They loitered sullenly about the place, expressing their displeasure at the proceedings of the French. One of them, pretending

tances on the Niagara are usually correct. On the east side there is a stream which perfectly answers the conditions. This is Cayuga Creek, two leagues above the Falls. Immediately in front of it is an island about a mile long, separated from the shore by a narrow and deep arm of the Niagara, into which Cayuga Creek discharges itself. The place is so obviously suited to building and launching a vessel, that, in the early part of this century, the government of the United States chose it for the construction of a schooner to carry supplies to the garrisons of the Upper Lakes. The neighboring village now bears the name of La Salle.

In examining this and other localities on the Niagara, I have been greatly aided by my friend O. H. Marshall, Esq., of Buffalo, who is unrivalled in his knowledge of the history and traditions of the Niagara frontier.

to be drunk, attacked the blacksmith and tried to kill him; but the Frenchman, brandishing a red-hot bar of iron, held him at bay till Hennepin ran to the rescue, when, as he declares, the severity of his rebuke caused the savage to desist.<sup>1</sup> The work of the ship-builders advanced rapidly; and when the Indian visitors beheld the vast ribs of the wooden monster, their jealousy was redoubled. A squaw told the French that they meant to burn the vessel on the stocks. All now stood anxiously on the watch. Cold, hunger, and discontent found imperfect antidotes in Tonty's energy and Hennepin's sermons.

La Salle was absent, and his lieutenant commanded in his place. Hennepin says that Tonty was jealous because he, the friar, kept a journal, and that he was forced to use all manner of just precautions to prevent the Italian from seizing it. The men, being half-starved, in consequence of the loss of their provisions on Lake Ontario, were restless and moody; and their discontent was fomented by one of their number, who had very probably been tampered with by La Salle's enemies.<sup>2</sup> The Senecas refused to

<sup>1</sup> Hennepin (1704), 97. On a paper drawn up at the instance of the Intendant Duchesneau, the names of the greater number of La Salle's men are preserved. These agree with those given by Hennepin: thus, the master-carpenter, whom he calls *Maître Moyse*, appears as *Moïse Hillaret*; and the blacksmith, whom he calls *La Forge*, is mentioned as — (illegible) *dit la Forge*.

<sup>2</sup> "This bad man," says Hennepin, "would infallibly have debauched our workmen, if I had not reassured them by the exhortations which I made them on fête-days and Sundays, after divine service" (1704), 98.

supply them with corn, and the frequent exhortations of the Récollet father proved an insufficient substitute. In this extremity, the two Mohegans did excellent service, — bringing deer and other game, which relieved the most pressing wants of the party, and went far to restore their cheerfulness.

La Salle, meanwhile, had gone down to the mouth of the river, with a sergeant and a number of men; and here, on the high point of land where Fort Niagara now stands, he marked out the foundations of two blockhouses.<sup>1</sup> Then, leaving his men to build them, he set out on foot for Fort Frontenac, where the condition of his affairs demanded his presence, and where he hoped to procure supplies to replace those lost in the wreck of his vessel. It was February, and the distance was some two hundred and fifty miles, through the snow-encumbered forests of the Iroquois and over the ice of Lake Ontario. Two men attended him, and a dog dragged his baggage on a sledge. For food, they had only a bag of parched corn, which failed them two days before they reached the fort; and they made the rest of the journey fasting.

During his absence, Tonty finished the vessel, which was of about forty-five tons' burden.<sup>2</sup> As

<sup>1</sup> *Lettre de La Salle*, 22 Août, 1682 (Margry, ii. 229); *Relation de Tonty*, 1684 (Ibid., i. 577). He called this new post Fort Conti. It was burned some months after, by the carelessness of the sergeant in command, and was the first of a succession of forts on this historic spot.

<sup>2</sup> Hennepin (1683), 46. In the edition of 1697, he says that it



spring opened, she was ready for launching. The friar pronounced his blessing on her; the assembled company sang *Te Deum*; cannon were fired; and French and Indians, warmed alike by a generous gift of brandy, shouted and yelped in chorus as she glided into the Niagara. Her builders towed her out and anchored her in the stream, safe at last from incendiary hands; and then, swinging their hammocks under her deck, slept in peace, beyond reach of the tomahawk. The Indians gazed on her with amazement. Five small cannon looked out from her portholes; and on her prow was carved a portentous monster, the Griffin, whose name she bore, in honor of the armorial bearings of Frontenac. La Salle had often been heard to say that he would make the griffin fly above the crows, or, in other words, make Frontenac triumph over the Jesuits.

They now took her up the river, and made her fast below the swift current at Black Rock. Here they finished her equipment, and waited for La Salle's return; but the absent commander did not appear. The spring and more than half of the summer had passed before they saw him again. At length, early in August, he arrived at the mouth of the Niagara, bringing three more friars; for, though no friend of the Jesuits, he was zealous for the Faith, and was rarely without a missionary in his journeyings. Like Hennepin, the three friars were all Flemings. One

was of sixty tons. I prefer to follow the earlier and more trustworthy narrative.

of them, Melithon Watteau, was to remain at Niagara; the others, Zenobe Membré and Gabriel Ribourde, were to preach the Faith among the tribes of the West. Ribourde was a hale and cheerful old man of sixty-four. He went four times up and down the Lewiston heights, while the men were climbing the steep pathway with their loads. It required four of them, well stimulated with brandy, to carry up the principal anchor destined for the "Griffin."

La Salle brought a tale of disaster. His enemies, bent on ruining the enterprise, had given out that he was embarked on a harebrained venture, from which he would never return. His creditors, excited by rumors set afloat to that end, had seized on all his property in the settled parts of Canada, though his seigniorship of Fort Frontenac alone would have more than sufficed to pay all his debts. There was no remedy. To defer the enterprise would have been to give his adversaries the triumph that they sought; and he hardened himself against the blow with his usual stoicism.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> La Salle's embarrassment at this time was so great that he purposed to send Tonty up the lakes in the "Griffin," while he went back to the colony to look after his affairs; but suspecting that the pilot, who had already wrecked one of his vessels, was in the pay of his enemies, he resolved at last to take charge of the expedition himself, to prevent a second disaster. (*Lettre de La Salle*, 22 Août, 1682; Margry, ii. 214.) Among the creditors who bore hard upon him were Migeon, Charon, Giton, and Peloquin, of Montreal, in whose name his furs at Fort Frontenac had been seized. The intendant also placed under seal all his furs at Quebec, among which is set down the not very precious item of two hundred and eighty-four skins of *enfants du diable*, or skunks.



## CHAPTER XI.

1679.

### LA SALLE ON THE UPPER LAKES.

THE VOYAGE OF THE "GRIFFIN." — DETROIT. — A STORM. — ST. IGNACE OF MICHILIMACKINAC. — RIVALS AND ENEMIES. — LAKE MICHIGAN. — HARDSHIPS. — A THREATENED FIGHT. — FORT MIAMI. — TONTY'S MISFORTUNES. — FOREBODINGS.

THE "Griffin" had lain moored by the shore, so near that Hennepin could preach on Sundays from the deck to the men encamped along the bank. She was now forced up against the current with tow-ropes and sails, till she reached the calm entrance of Lake Erie. On the seventh of August, La Salle and his followers embarked, sang *Te Deum*, and fired their cannon. A fresh breeze sprang up; and with swelling canvas the "Griffin" ploughed the virgin waves of Lake Erie, where sail was never seen before. For three days they held their course over these unknown waters, and on the fourth turned northward into the Strait of Detroit. Here, on the right hand and on the left, lay verdant prairies, dotted with groves and bordered with lofty forests. They saw walnut, chestnut, and wild plum trees, and oaks festooned with grape-vines; herds of deer,

and flocks of swans and wild turkeys. The bulwarks of the "Griffin" were plentifully hung with game which the men killed on shore, and among the rest with a number of bears, much commended by Hennepin for their want of ferocity and the excellence of their flesh. "Those," he says, "who will one day have the happiness to possess this fertile and pleasant strait, will be very much obliged to those who have shown them the way." They crossed Lake St. Clair,<sup>1</sup> and still sailed northward against the current, till now, sparkling in the sun, Lake Huron spread before them like a sea.

For a time they bore on prosperously. Then the wind died to a calm, then freshened to a gale, then rose to a furious tempest; and the vessel tossed wildly among the short, steep, perilous waves of the raging lake. Even La Salle called on his followers to commend themselves to Heaven. All fell to their prayers but the godless pilot, who was loud in complaint against his commander for having brought him, after the honor he had won on the ocean, to drown at last ignominiously in fresh water. The rest clamored to the saints. St. Anthony of Padua was promised a chapel to be built in his honor, if he would but save them from their jeopardy; while in the same breath La Salle and the friars declared him patron of their great enterprise.<sup>2</sup> The saint heard

<sup>1</sup> They named it Sainte Claire, of which the present name is a perversion.

<sup>2</sup> Hennepin (1683), 58.

their prayers. The obedient winds were tamed; and the "Griffin" plunged on her way through foaming surges that still grew calmer as she advanced. Now the sun shone forth on woody islands, Bois Blanc and Mackinaw and the distant Manitoulines, — on the forest wastes of Michigan and the vast blue bosom of the angry lake; and now her port was won, and she found her rest behind the point of St. Ignace of Michilimackinac, floating in that tranquil cove where crystal waters cover but cannot hide the pebbly depths beneath. Before her rose the house and chapel of the Jesuits, enclosed with palisades; on the right, the Huron village, with its bark cabins and its fence of tall pickets; on the left, the square compact houses of the French traders; and, not far off, the clustered wigwams of an Ottawa village.<sup>1</sup> Here was a centre of the Jesuit missions, and a centre of the Indian trade; and here, under the shadow of the cross, was much sharp practice in the service of Mammon. Keen traders, with or without a license, and lawless *coureurs de bois*, whom a few years of forest life had weaned from civilization, made St. Ignace their resort; and here there were many of them when the "Griffin" came. They and their employers hated and feared La Salle, who, sustained as he was by the governor, might set at nought the prohibition of the King, debarring him from traffic with these tribes. Yet, while plotting

<sup>1</sup> There is a rude plan of the establishment in La Hontan, though in several editions its value is destroyed by the reversal of the plate.

against him, they took pains to allay his distrust by a show of welcome.

The "Griffin" fired her cannon, and the Indians yelped in wonder and amazement. The adventurers landed in state, and marched under arms to the bark chapel of the Ottawa village, where they heard mass. La Salle knelt before the altar, in a mantle of scarlet bordered with gold. Soldiers, sailors, and artisans knelt around him, — black Jesuits, gray Récollets, swarthy *voyageurs*, and painted savages; a devout but motley concourse.

As they left the chapel, the Ottawa chiefs came to bid them welcome, and the Hurons saluted them with a volley of musketry. They saw the "Griffin" at her anchorage, surrounded by more than a hundred bark canoes, like a Triton among minnows. Yet it was with more wonder than good-will that the Indians of the mission gazed on the "floating fort," for so they called the vessel. A deep jealousy of La Salle's designs had been infused into them. His own followers, too, had been tampered with. In the autumn before, it may be remembered, he had sent fifteen men up the lakes to trade for him, with orders to go thence to the Illinois and make preparation against his coming. Early in the summer, Tonty had been despatched in a canoe from Niagara to look after them.<sup>1</sup> It was high time. Most of the men had been seduced from their duty, and had disobeyed

<sup>1</sup> *Relation de Tonty*, 1684; *Ibid.*, 1693. He was overtaken at the Detroit by the "Griffin."

their orders, squandered the goods intrusted to them, or used them in trading on their own account. La Salle found four of them at Michilimackinac. These he arrested, and sent Tonty to the Falls of Ste. Marie, where two others were captured, with their plunder. The rest were in the woods, and it was useless to pursue them.

Anxious and troubled as to the condition of his affairs in Canada, La Salle had meant, after seeing his party safe at Michilimackinac, to leave Tonty to conduct it to the Illinois, while he himself returned to the colony. But Tonty was still at Ste. Marie, and he had none to trust but himself. Therefore, he resolved at all risks to remain with his men; "for," he says, "I judged my presence absolutely necessary to retain such of them as were left me, and prevent them from being enticed away during the winter." Moreover, he thought that he had detected an intrigue of his enemies to hound on the Iroquois against the Illinois, in order to defeat his plan by involving him in the war.

Early in September he set sail again, and passing westward into Lake Michigan,<sup>1</sup> cast anchor near one of the islands at the entrance of Green Bay. Here, for once, he found a friend in the person of a Pottawattamie chief, who had been so wrought upon

<sup>1</sup> Then usually known as Lac des Illinois, because it gave access to the country of the tribes so called. Three years before, Allouez gave it the name of Lac St. Joseph, by which it is often designated by the early writers. Membre, Douay, and others, call it Lac Dauphin.

by the politic kindness of Frontenac that he declared himself ready to die for the children of Onontio.<sup>1</sup> Here, too, he found several of his advance party, who had remained faithful and collected a large store of furs. It would have been better had they proved false, like the rest. La Salle, who asked counsel of no man, resolved, in spite of his followers, to send back the "Griffin" laden with these furs, and others collected on the way, to satisfy his creditors.<sup>2</sup> It was a rash resolution, for it involved trusting her to the pilot, who had already proved either incompetent or treacherous. She fired a parting shot, and on the eighteenth of September set sail for Niagara, with orders to return to the head of Lake Michigan as soon as she had discharged her cargo. La Salle, with the fourteen men who remained, in four canoes deeply laden with a forge, tools, merchandise, and arms, put out from the island and resumed his voyage.

The parting was not auspicious. The lake, glassy and calm in the afternoon, was convulsed at night with a sudden storm, when the canoes were midway between the island and the main shore. It was with difficulty that they could keep together, the men

<sup>1</sup> "The Great Mountain," the Iroquois name for the governor of Canada. It was borrowed by other tribes also.

<sup>2</sup> In the license of discovery granted to La Salle, he is expressly prohibited from trading with the Ottawas and others who brought furs to Montreal. This traffic on the lakes was, therefore, illicit. His enemy, the Intendant Duchesneau, afterwards used this against him. *Lettre de Duchesneau au Ministre*, 10 Nov., 1680.



shouting to each other through the darkness. Hennepin, who was in the smallest canoe with a heavy load, and a carpenter for a companion who was awkward at the paddle, found himself in jeopardy which demanded all his nerve. The voyagers thought themselves happy when they gained at last the shelter of a little sandy cove, where they dragged up their canoes, and made their cheerless bivouac in the drenched and dripping forest. Here they spent five days, living on pumpkins and Indian corn, the gift of their Pottawattamie friends, and on a Canada porcupine brought in by La Salle's Mohegan hunter. The gale raged meanwhile with relentless fury. They trembled when they thought of the "Griffin." When at length the tempest lulled, they re-embarked, and steered southward along the shore of Wisconsin; but again the storm fell upon them, and drove them for safety to a bare, rocky islet. Here they made a fire of drift-wood, crouched around it, drew their blankets over their heads, and in this miserable plight, pelted with sleet and rain, remained for two days.

At length they were afloat again; but their prosperity was brief. On the twenty-eighth, a fierce squall drove them to a point of rocks covered with bushes, where they consumed the little that remained of their provisions. On the first of October they paddled about thirty miles, without food, when they came to a village of Pottawattamies, who ran down to the shore to help them to land; but La Salle, fear-

ing that some of his men would steal the merchandise and desert to the Indians, insisted on going three leagues farther, to the great indignation of his followers. The lake, swept by an easterly gale, was rolling its waves against the beach, like the ocean in a storm. In the attempt to land, La Salle's canoe was nearly swamped. He and his three canoemen leaped into the water, and in spite of the surf, which nearly drowned them, dragged their vessel ashore with all its load. He then went to the rescue of Hennepin, who with his awkward companion was in woful need of succor. Father Gabriel, with his sixty-four years, was no match for the surf and the violent undertow. Hennepin, finding himself safe, waded to his relief, and carried him ashore on his sturdy shoulders; while the old friar, though drenched to the skin, laughed gayly under his cowl as his brother missionary staggered with him up the beach.<sup>1</sup>

When all were safe ashore, La Salle, who distrusted the Indians they had passed, took post on a hill, and ordered his followers to prepare their guns for action. Nevertheless, as they were starving, an effort must be risked to gain a supply of food; and he sent three men back to the village to purchase it. Well armed, but faint with toil and famine, they made their way through the stormy forest bearing a pipe of peace, but on arriving saw that the scared inhabitants had fled. They found, however, a stock of corn, of

<sup>1</sup> Hennepin (1683), 79.



which they took a portion, leaving goods in exchange, and then set out on their return.

Meanwhile, about twenty of the warriors, armed with bows and arrows, approached the camp of the French to reconnoitre. La Salle went to meet them with some of his men, opened a parley with them, and kept them seated at the foot of the hill till his three messengers returned, when on seeing the peace-pipe the warriors set up a cry of joy. In the morning they brought more corn to the camp, with a supply of fresh venison, not a little cheering to the exhausted Frenchmen, who, in dread of treachery, had stood under arms all night.

This was no journey of pleasure. The lake was ruffled with almost ceaseless storms; clouds big with rain above, a turmoil of gray and gloomy waves beneath. Every night the canoes must be shouldered through the breakers and dragged up the steep banks, which, as they neared the site of Milwaukee, became almost insurmountable. The men paddled all day, with no other food than a handful of Indian corn. They were spent with toil, sick with the haws and wild berries which they ravenously devoured, and dejected at the prospect before them. Father Gabriel's good spirits began to fail. He fainted several times from famine and fatigue, but was revived by a certain "confection of Hyacinth" administered by Hennepin, who had a small box of this precious specific.

At length they descried at a distance, on the stormy shore, two or three eagles among a busy

congregation of crows or turkey buzzards. They paddled in all haste to the spot. The feasters took flight; and the starved travellers found the mangled body of a deer, lately killed by the wolves. This good luck proved the inauguration of plenty. As they approached the head of the lake, game grew abundant; and, with the aid of the Mohegan, there was no lack of bear's meat and venison. They found wild grapes, too, in the woods, and gathered them by cutting down the trees to which the vines clung.

While thus employed, they were startled by a sight often so fearful in the waste and the wilderness, — the print of a human foot. It was clear that Indians were not far off. A strict watch was kept, not, as it proved, without cause; for that night, while the sentry thought of little but screening himself and his gun from the floods of rain, a party of Outagamies crept under the bank, where they lurked for some time before he discovered them. Being challenged, they came forward, professing great friendship, and pretending to have mistaken the French for Iroquois. In the morning, however, there was an outcry from La Salle's servant, who declared that the visitors had stolen his coat from under the inverted canoe where he had placed it; while some of the carpenters also complained of being robbed. La Salle well knew that if the theft were left unpunished, worse would come of it. First, he posted his men at the woody point of a peninsula, whose sandy neck was interposed between them and

the main forest. Then he went forth, pistol in hand, met a young Outagami, seized him, and led him prisoner to his camp. This done, he again set out, and soon found an Outagami chief, — for the wigwams were not far distant, — to whom he told what he had done, adding that unless the stolen goods were restored, the prisoner should be killed. The Indians were in perplexity, for they had cut the coat to pieces and divided it. In this dilemma they resolved, being strong in numbers, to rescue their comrade by force. Accordingly, they came down to the edge of the forest, or posted themselves behind fallen trees on the banks, while La Salle's men in their stronghold braced their nerves for the fight. Here three Flemish friars with their rosaries, and eleven Frenchmen with their guns, confronted a hundred and twenty screeching Outagamies. Hennepin, who had seen service, and who had always an exhortation at his tongue's end, busied himself to inspire the rest with a courage equal to his own. Neither party, however, had an appetite for the fray. A parley ensued: full compensation was made for the stolen goods, and the aggrieved Frenchmen were farther propitiated with a gift of beaver-skins.

Their late enemies, now become friends, spent the next day in dances, feasts, and speeches. They entreated La Salle not to advance farther, since the Illinois, through whose country he must pass, would be sure to kill him; for, added these friendly counselors, they hated the French because they had been

instigating the Iroquois to invade their country. Here was another subject of anxiety. La Salle was confirmed in his belief that his busy and unscrupulous enemies were intriguing for his destruction.

He pushed on, however, circling around the southern shore of Lake Michigan, till he reached the mouth of the St. Joseph, called by him the Miamis. Here Tonty was to have rejoined him with twenty men, making his way from Michilimackinac along the eastern shore of the lake; but the rendezvous was a solitude, — Tonty was nowhere to be seen. It was the first of November; winter was at hand, and the streams would soon be frozen. The men clamored to go forward, urging that they should starve if they could not reach the villages of the Illinois before the tribe scattered for the winter hunt. La Salle was inexorable. If they should all desert, he said, he, with his Mohegan hunter and the three friars, would still remain and wait for Tonty. The men grumbled, but obeyed; and, to divert their thoughts, he set them at building a fort of timber on a rising ground at the mouth of the river.

They had spent twenty days at this task, and their work was well advanced, when at length Tonty appeared. He brought with him only half of his men. Provisions had failed; and the rest of his party had been left thirty leagues behind, to sustain themselves by hunting. La Salle told him to return and hasten them forward. He set out with two men. A violent north wind arose. He tried to run

his canoe ashore through the breakers. The two men could not manage their vessel, and he with his one hand could not help them. She swamped, rolling over in the surf. Guns, baggage, and provisions were lost; and the three voyagers returned to the Miamis, subsisting on acorns by the way. Happily, the men left behind, excepting two deserters, succeeded, a few days after, in rejoining the party.<sup>1</sup>

Thus was one heavy load lifted from the heart of La Salle. But where was the "Griffin"? Time enough, and more than enough, had passed for her voyage to Niagara and back again. He scanned the dreary horizon with an anxious eye. No returning sail gladdened the watery solitude, and a dark foreboding gathered on his heart. Yet further delay was impossible. He sent back two men to Michilimackinac to meet her, if she still existed, and pilot her to his new fort of the Miamis, and then prepared to ascend the river, whose weedy edges were already glassed with thin flakes of ice.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Hennepin (1683), 112; *Relation de Tonty*, 1693.

<sup>2</sup> The official account of this journey is given at length in the *Relation des Découvertes et des Voyages du Sieur de la Salle*, 1679-1681. This valuable document, compiled from letters and diaries of La Salle, early in the year 1682, was known to Hennepin, who evidently had a copy of it before him when he wrote his book, in which he incorporated many passages from it.

## CHAPTER XII.

1679, 1680.

### LA SALLE ON THE ILLINOIS.

THE ST. JOSEPH. — ADVENTURE OF LA SALLE. — THE PRAIRIES. — FAMINE. — THE GREAT TOWN OF THE ILLINOIS. — INDIANS. — INTRIGUES. — DIFFICULTIES. — POLICY OF LA SALLE. — DESERTION. — ANOTHER ATTEMPT TO POISON LA SALLE.

ON the third of December the party re-embarked, thirty-three in all, in eight canoes,<sup>1</sup> and ascended the chill current of the St. Joseph, bordered with dreary meadows and bare gray forests. When they approached the site of the present village of South Bend, they looked anxiously along the shore on their right to find the portage or path leading to the headquarters of the Illinois. The Mohegan was absent, hunting; and, unaided by his practised eye, they passed the path without seeing it. La Salle landed to search the woods. Hours passed, and he did not return. Hennepin and Tonty grew uneasy, disembarked, bivouacked, ordered guns to be fired, and sent out men to scour the country. Night came, but not their lost leader. Muffled in their blankets and

<sup>1</sup> *Lettre de Duchesneau à ———, 10 Nov., 1680.*

powdered by the thick-falling snowflakes, they sat ruefully speculating as to what had befallen him; nor was it till four o'clock of the next afternoon that they saw him approaching along the margin of the river. His face and hands were besmirched with charcoal; and he was further decorated with two opossums which hung from his belt, and which he had killed with a stick as they were swinging head downwards from the bough of a tree, after the fashion of that singular beast. He had missed his way in the forest, and had been forced to make a wide circuit around the edge of a swamp; while the snow, of which the air was full, added to his perplexities. Thus he pushed on through the rest of the day and the greater part of the night, till, about two o'clock in the morning, he reached the river again, and fired his gun as a signal to his party. Hearing no answering shot, he pursued his way along the bank, when he presently saw the gleam of a fire among the dense thickets close at hand. Not doubting that he had found the bivouac of his party, he hastened to the spot. To his surprise, no human being was to be seen. Under a tree beside the fire was a heap of dry grass impressed with the form of a man who must have fled but a moment before, for his couch was still warm. It was no doubt an Indian, ambushed on the bank, watching to kill some passing enemy. La Salle called out in several Indian languages; but there was dead silence all around. He then, with admirable coolness, took possession of the quarters he had found, shouting to



their invisible proprietor that he was about to sleep in his bed; piled a barricade of bushes around the spot, rekindled the dying fire, warmed his benumbed hands, stretched himself on the dried grass, and slept undisturbed till morning.

The Mohegan had rejoined the party before La Salle's return, and with his aid the portage was soon found. Here the party encamped. La Salle, who was excessively fatigued, occupied, together with Hennepin, a wigwam covered in the Indian manner with mats of reeds. The cold forced them to kindle a fire, which before daybreak set the mats in a blaze; and the two sleepers narrowly escaped being burned along with their hut.

In the morning, the party shouldered their canoes and baggage and began their march for the sources of the river Illinois, some five miles distant. Around them stretched a desolate plain, half-covered with snow and strewn with the skulls and bones of buffalo; while, on its farthest verge, they could see the lodges of the Miami Indians, who had made this place their abode. As they filed on their way, a man named Duplessis, bearing a grudge against La Salle, who walked just before him, raised his gun to shoot him through the back, but was prevented by one of his comrades. They soon reached a spot where the oozy, saturated soil quaked beneath their tread. All around were clumps of alder-bushes, tufts of rank grass, and pools of glistening water. In the midst a dark and lazy current, which a tall man might



bestride, crept twisting like a snake among the weeds and rushes. Here were the sources of the Kankakee, one of the heads of the Illinois.<sup>1</sup> They set their canoes on this thread of water, embarked their baggage and themselves, and pushed down the sluggish streamlet, looking, at a little distance, like men who sailed on land. Fed by an unceasing tribute of the spongy soil, it quickly widened to a river; and they floated on their way through a voiceless, lifeless solitude of dreary oak barrens, or boundless marshes overgrown with reeds. At night, they built their fire on ground made firm by frost, and bivouacked among the rushes. A few days brought them to a more favored region. On the right hand and on the

<sup>1</sup> The Kankakee was called at this time the Theakiki, or Haukiki (Marest); a name which, as Charlevoix says, was afterwards corrupted by the French to Kiakiki, whence, probably, its present form. In La Salle's time, the name "Theakiki" was given to the river Illinois through all its course. It was also called the Rivière Seignelay, the Rivière des Macopins, and the Rivière Divine, or Rivière de la Divine. The latter name, when Charlevoix visited the country in 1721, was confined to the northern branch. He gives an interesting and somewhat graphic account of the portage and the sources of the Kankakee, in his letter dated *De la Source du Theakiki, ce dix-sept Septembre, 1721.*

Why the Illinois should ever have been called the "Divine," it is not easy to see. The Memoirs of St. Simon suggest an explanation. Madame de Frontenac and her friend Mademoiselle d'Outrelaise, he tells us lived together in apartments at the Arsenal, where they held their *salon* and exercised a great power in society. They were called at court *les Divines*. (St. Simon, v. 335: Cheruel.) In compliment to Frontenac, the river may have been named after his wife or her friend. The suggestion is due to M. Margry. I have seen a map by Raudin, Frontenac's engineer, on which the river is called "Rivière de la Divine ou l'Outrelaise."

left stretched the boundless prairie, dotted with leafless groves and bordered by gray wintry forests, scorched by the fires kindled in the dried grass by Indian hunters, and strewn with the carcasses and the bleached skulls of innumerable buffalo. The plains were scored with their pathways, and the muddy edges of the river were full of their hoof-prints. Yet not one was to be seen. At night, the horizon glowed with distant fires; and by day the savage hunters could be descried at times roaming on the verge of the prairie. The men, discontented and half-starved, would have deserted to them had they dared. La Salle's Mohegan could kill no game except two lean deer, with a few wild geese and swans. At length, in their straits, they made a happy discovery. It was a buffalo bull, fast mired in a slough. They killed him, lashed a cable about him, and then twelve men dragged out the shaggy monster, whose ponderous carcass demanded their utmost efforts.

The scene changed again as they descended. On either hand ran ranges of woody hills, following the course of the river; and when they mounted to their tops, they saw beyond them a rolling sea of dull green prairie, a boundless pasture of the buffalo and the deer, in our own day strangely transformed, — yellow in harvest-time with ripened wheat, and dotted with the roofs of a hardy and valiant yeomanry.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The change is very recent. Within the memory of men not yet old, wolves and deer, besides wild swans, wild turkeys, cranes,

*Starved Rock.*





View of the Little River, S. C.

View of the Little River, S. C.



They passed the site of the future town of Ottawa, and saw on their right the high plateau of Buffalo Rock, long a favorite dwelling-place of Indians. A league below, the river glided among islands bordered with stately woods. Close on their left towered a lofty cliff,<sup>1</sup> crested with trees that overhung the rippling current; while before them spread the valley of the Illinois, in broad low meadows, bordered on the right by the graceful hills at whose foot now lies the village of Utica. A population far more numerous then tenanted the valley. Along the right bank of the river were clustered the lodges of a great Indian town. Hennepin counted four hundred and sixty of them.<sup>2</sup> In shape, they were somewhat like the

and pelicans, abounded in this region. In 1840, a friend of mine shot a deer from the window of a farmhouse, near the present town of La Salle. Running wolves on horseback was his favorite amusement in this part of the country. The buffalo long ago disappeared; but the early settlers found frequent remains of them. Mr. James Clark, of Utica, Ill., told me that he once found a large quantity of their bones and skulls in one place, as if a herd had perished in the snowdrifts.

<sup>1</sup> "Starved Rock." It will hold, hereafter, a conspicuous place in the narrative.

<sup>2</sup> *La Louisiane*, 137. Allouez (*Relation*, 1673-79) found three hundred and fifty-one lodges. This was in 1677. The population of this town, which embraced five or six distinct tribes of the Illinois, was continually changing. In 1675, Marquette addressed here an auditory composed of five hundred chiefs and old men, and fifteen hundred young men, besides women and children. He estimates the number of fires at five or six hundred. (*Voyages du Père Marquette*, 98: Lenox.) Membre, who was here in 1680, says that it then contained seven or eight thousand souls. (Membre in *Le Clerc, Premier Établissement de la Foy*, ii. 173.) On the remarkable manuscript map of Franquelin, 1684, it is set down at twelve hun-

arched top of a baggage-wagon. They were built of a frame-work of poles, covered with mats of rushes closely interwoven; and each contained three or four fires, of which the greater part served for two families.

Here, then, was the town; but where were the inhabitants? All was silent as the desert. The lodges were empty, the fires dead, and the ashes cold. La Salle had expected this; for he knew that in the autumn the Illinois always left their towns for their winter hunting, and that the time of their return had not yet come. Yet he was not the less

dred warriors, or about six thousand souls. This was after the destructive inroad of the Iroquois. Some years later, Rasle reported upwards of twenty-four hundred families. (*Lettre à son Frère*, in *Lettres Édifiantes*.)

At times, nearly the whole Illinois population was gathered here. At other times, the several tribes that composed it separated, some dwelling apart from the rest; so that at one period the Illinois formed eleven villages, while at others they were gathered into two, of which this was much the larger. The meadows around it were extensively cultivated, yielding large crops, chiefly of Indian corn. The lodges were built along the river-bank for a distance of a mile, and sometimes far more. In their shape, though not in their material, they resembled those of the Hurons. There were no palisades or embankments.

This neighborhood abounds in Indian relics. The village graveyard appears to have been on a rising ground, near the river immediately in front of the town of Utica. This is the only part of the river bottom, from this point to the Mississippi, not liable to inundation in the spring floods. It now forms part of a farm occupied by a tenant of Mr. James Clark. Both Mr. Clark and his tenant informed me that every year great quantities of human bones and teeth were turned up here by the plough. Many implements of stone are also found, together with beads and other ornaments of Indian and European fabric.



embarrassed, for he would fain have bought a supply of food to relieve his famished followers. Some of them, searching the deserted town, presently found the *caches*, or covered pits, in which the Indians hid their stock of corn. This was precious beyond measure in their eyes, and to touch it would be a deep offence. La Salle shrank from provoking their anger, which might prove the ruin of his plans; but his necessity overcame his prudence, and he took thirty *minots* of corn, hoping to appease the owners by presents. Thus provided, the party embarked again, and resumed their downward voyage.

On New Year's Day, 1680, they landed and heard mass. Then Hennepin wished a happy new year to La Salle first, and afterwards to all the men, making them a speech, which, as he tells us, was "most touching."<sup>1</sup> He and his two brethren next embraced the whole company in turn, "in a manner," writes the father, "most tender and affectionate," exhorting them, at the same time, to patience, faith, and constancy. Four days after these solemnities, they reached the long expansion of the river then called Pimitoui, and now known as Peoria Lake, and leisurely made their way downward to the site of the city of Peoria.<sup>2</sup> Here, as evening drew near, they

<sup>1</sup> "Les paroles les plus touchantes." — *Hennepin* (1683), 139. The later editions add the modest qualification, "que je pus."

<sup>2</sup> Peoria was the name of one of the tribes of the Illinois. Hennepin's dates here do not exactly agree with those of La Salle (*Lettre du 29 Sept.*, 1680), who says that they were at the Illinois village on the first of January, and at Peoria Lake on the fifth.

saw a faint spire of smoke curling above the gray forest, betokening that Indians were at hand. La Salle, as we have seen, had been warned that these tribes had been taught to regard him as their enemy; and when, in the morning, he resumed his course, he was prepared alike for peace or war.

The shores now approached each other; and the Illinois was once more a river, bordered on either hand with overhanging woods.<sup>1</sup>

At nine o'clock, doubling a point, he saw about eighty Illinois wigwams, on both sides of the river. He instantly ordered the eight canoes to be ranged in line, abreast, across the stream, — Tonty on the right, and he himself on the left. The men laid down their paddles and seized their weapons; while, in this warlike guise, the current bore them swiftly into the midst of the surprised and astounded savages. The camps were in a panic. Warriors whooped and howled; squaws and children screeched in chorus. Some snatched their bows and war-clubs; some ran in terror; and, in the midst of the hubbub, La Salle leaped ashore, followed by his men. None knew better how to deal with Indians; and he made no sign of friendship, knowing that it might be construed as a token of fear. His little knot of Frenchmen stood, gun in hand, passive, yet prepared for battle.

<sup>1</sup> At least, it is so now at this place. Perhaps, in La Salle's time, it was not wholly so; for there is evidence, in various parts of the West, that the forest has made considerable encroachments on the open country.

The Indians, on their part, rallying a little from their fright, made all haste to proffer peace. Two of their chiefs came forward, holding out the calumet; while another began a loud harangue, to check the young warriors who were aiming their arrows from the farther bank. La Salle, responding to these friendly overtures, displayed another calumet; while Hennepin caught several scared children and soothed them with winning blandishments.<sup>1</sup> The uproar was quelled; and the strangers were presently seated in the midst of the camp, beset by a throng of wild and swarthy figures.

Food was placed before them; and, as the Illinois code of courtesy enjoined, their entertainers conveyed the morsels with their own hands to the lips of these unenviable victims of their hospitality, while others rubbed their feet with bear's grease. La Salle, on his part, made them a gift of tobacco and hatchets; and when he had escaped from their caresses, rose and harangued them. He told them that he had been forced to take corn from their granaries, lest his men should die of hunger; but he prayed them not to be offended, promising full restitution or ample payment. He had come, he said, to protect them against their enemies, and teach them to pray to the true God. As for the Iroquois, they were subjects of the Great King, and therefore brethren of the French; yet, nevertheless, should they begin a war and invade the country of the Illinois, he would

<sup>1</sup> Hennepin (1683), 142.

stand by them, give them guns, and fight in their defence, if they would permit him to build a fort among them for the security of his men. It was also, he added, his purpose to build a great wooden canoe, in which to descend the Mississippi to the sea, and then return, bringing them the goods of which they stood in need; but if they would not consent to his plans and sell provisions to his men, he would pass on to the Osages, who would then reap all the benefits of intercourse with the French, while they were left destitute, at the mercy of the Iroquois.<sup>1</sup>

This threat had its effect, for it touched their deep-rooted jealousy of the Osages. They were lavish of promises, and feasts and dances consumed the day. Yet La Salle soon learned that the intrigues of his enemies were still pursuing him. That evening, unknown to him, a stranger appeared in the Illinois camp. He was a Mascoutin chief, named Monso, attended by five or six Miamis, and bringing a gift of knives, hatchets, and kettles to the Illinois.<sup>2</sup> The chiefs assembled in a secret nocturnal session, where, smoking their pipes, they listened with open ears to the harangue of the envoys. Monso told them that he had come in behalf of certain Frenchmen, whom he named, to warn his hearers against the designs of La Salle, whom he denounced

<sup>1</sup> Hennepin (1683), 144-149. The later editions omit a part of the above.

<sup>2</sup> "Un sauvage, nommé Monso, qui veut dire Chevreuil."—*La Salle*. Probably Monso is a misprint for Mouso, as *mousoa* is Illinois for *chevreuil*, or deer.

as a partisan and spy of the Iroquois, affirming that he was now on his way to stir up the tribes beyond the Mississippi to join in a war against the Illinois, who, thus assailed from the east and from the west, would be utterly destroyed. There was no hope for them, he added, but in checking the farther progress of La Salle, or, at least, retarding it, thus causing his men to desert him. Having thrown his firebrand, Monso and his party left the camp in haste, dreading to be confronted with the object of their aspersions.<sup>1</sup>

In the morning, La Salle saw a change in the behavior of his hosts. They looked on him askance, cold, sullen, and suspicious. There was one Omawha, a chief, whose favor he had won the day before by the politic gift of two hatchets and three knives, and who now came to him in secret to tell him what had taken place at the nocturnal council. La Salle at once saw in it a device of his enemies; and this belief was confirmed, when, in the afternoon, Nicanopé, brother of the head chief, sent to invite the Frenchmen to a feast. They repaired to his lodge; but before dinner was served, — that is to say, while the guests, white and red, were seated on

<sup>1</sup> Hennepin (1683), 151, (1704), 205; Le Clerc, ii. 157; *Mémoire du Voyage de M. de la Salle*. This is a paper appended to Frontenac's Letter to the Minister, 9 Nov., 1680. Hennepin prints a translation of it in the English edition of his later work. It charges the Jesuit Allouez with being at the bottom of the intrigue. Compare *Lettre de La Salle*, 29 Sept., 1680 (Margry, ii. 41), and *Mémoire de La Salle*, in Thomassy, *Géologie Pratique de la Louisiane*, 203.

The account of the affair of Monso, in the spurious work bearing Tonty's name, is mere romance.

mats, each with his hunting-knife in his hand, and the wooden bowl before him which was to receive his share of the bear's or buffalo's meat, or the corn boiled in fat, with which he was to be regaled, — while such was the posture of the company, their host arose and began a long speech. He told the Frenchmen that he had invited them to his lodge less to refresh their bodies with good cheer than to cure their minds of the dangerous purpose which possessed them, of descending the Mississippi. Its shores, he said, were beset by savage tribes, against whose numbers and ferocity their valor would avail nothing; its waters were infested by serpents, alligators, and unnatural monsters; while the river itself, after raging among rocks and whirlpools, plunged headlong at last into a fathomless gulf, which would swallow them and their vessel forever.

La Salle's men were for the most part raw hands, knowing nothing of the wilderness, and easily alarmed at its dangers; but there were two among them, old *coureurs de bois*, who unfortunately knew too much; for they understood the Indian orator, and explained his speech to the rest. As La Salle looked around on the circle of his followers, he read an augury of fresh trouble in their disturbed and rueful visages. He waited patiently, however, till the speaker had ended, and then answered him, through his interpreter, with great composure. First, he thanked him for the friendly warning which his affection had impelled him to utter; but, he con-



tinued, the greater the danger, the greater the honor; and even if the danger were real, Frenchmen would never flinch from it. But were not the Illinois jealous? Had they not been deluded by lies? "We were not asleep, my brother, when Monso came to tell you, under cover of night, that we were spies of the Iroquois. The presents he gave you, that you might believe his falsehoods, are at this moment buried in the earth under this lodge. If he told the truth, why did he skulk away in the dark? Why did he not show himself by day? Do you not see that when we first came among you, and your camp was all in confusion, we could have killed you without needing help from the Iroquois? And now, while I am speaking, could we not put your old men to death, while your young warriors are all gone away to hunt? If we meant to make war on you, we should need no help from the Iroquois, who have so often felt the force of our arms. Look at what we have brought you. It is not weapons to destroy you, but merchandise and tools for your good. If you still harbor evil thoughts of us, be frank as we are, and speak them boldly. Go after this impostor Monso, and bring him back, that we may answer him face to face; for he never saw either us or the Iroquois, and what can he know of the plots that he pretends to reveal?"<sup>1</sup> Nicanopé had nothing to

<sup>1</sup> The above is a paraphrase, with some condensation, from Hennepin, whose account is substantially identical with that of La Salle.

reply, and, grunting assent in the depths of his throat, made a sign that the feast should proceed.

The French were lodged in huts, near the Indian camp; and, fearing treachery, La Salle placed a guard at night. On the morning after the feast, he came out into the frosty air and looked about him for the sentinels. Not one of them was to be seen. Vexed and alarmed, he entered hut after hut and roused his drowsy followers. Six of the number, including two of the best carpenters, were nowhere to be found. Discontented and mutinous from the first, and now terrified by the fictions of Nicanopé, they had deserted, preferring the hardships of the midwinter forest to the mysterious terrors of the Mississippi. La Salle mustered the rest before him, and inveighed sternly against the cowardice and baseness of those who had thus abandoned him, regardless of his many favors. If any here, he added, are afraid, let them but wait till the spring, and they shall have free leave to return to Canada, safely and without dishonor.<sup>1</sup>

This desertion cut him to the heart. It showed him that he was leaning on a broken reed; and he felt that, on an enterprise full of doubt and peril, there were scarcely four men in his party whom he could trust. Nor was desertion the worst he had to fear; for here, as at Fort Frontenac, an attempt was made to kill him. Tonty tells us that poison was

<sup>1</sup> Hennepin (1683), 162. *Déclaration faite par Moyse Hillaret, charpentier de barque, cy devant au service du Sr. de la Salle.*



placed in the pot in which their food was cooked, and that La Salle was saved by an antidote which some of his friends had given him before he left France. This, it will be remembered, was an epoch of poisoners. It was in the following month that the notorious La Voisin was burned alive, at Paris, for practices to which many of the highest nobility were charged with being privy, not excepting some in whose veins ran the blood of the gorgeous spendthrift who ruled the destinies of France.<sup>1</sup>

In these early French enterprises in the West, it was to the last degree difficult to hold men to their duty. Once fairly in the wilderness, completely freed from the sharp restraints of authority in which they had passed their lives, a spirit of lawlessness broke out among them with a violence proportioned to the pressure which had hitherto controlled it. Discipline had no resources and no guarantee; while those outlaws of the forest, the *coureurs de bois*, were always before their eyes, a standing example of unbridled license. La Salle, eminently skilful in his dealings with Indians, was rarely so happy with his own countrymen; and yet the desertions from which he was continually suffering were due far more to the inevitable difficulty of his position than to any want of conduct on his part.

<sup>1</sup> The equally noted Brinvilliers was burned four years before. An account of both will be found in the Letters of Madame de Sévigné. The memoirs of the time abound in evidence of the frightful prevalence of these practices, and the commotion which they excited in all ranks of society.

## CHAPTER XIII.

1680.

### FORT CRÈVECŒUR.

BUILDING OF THE FORT.—LOSS OF THE “GRIFFIN.”—A BOLD RESOLUTION.—ANOTHER VESSEL.—HENNEPIN SENT TO THE MISSISSIPPI.—DEPARTURE OF LA SALLE.

LA SALLE now resolved to leave the Indian camp, and fortify himself for the winter in a strong position, where his men would be less exposed to dangerous influence, and where he could hold his ground against an outbreak of the Illinois or an Iroquois invasion. At the middle of January, a thaw broke up the ice which had closed the river; and he set out in a canoe, with Hennepin, to visit the site he had chosen for his projected fort. It was half a league below the camp, on a low hill or knoll, two hundred yards from the southern bank. On either side was a deep ravine, and in front a marshy tract, overflowed at high water. Thither, then, the party was removed. They dug a ditch behind the hill, connecting the two ravines, and thus completely isolating it. The hill was nearly square in form. An embankment of earth was thrown up on every side: its declivities

were sloped steeply down to the bottom of the ravines and the ditch, and further guarded by *chevaux-de-frise*; while a palisade, twenty-five feet high, was planted around the whole. The lodgings of the men, built of musket-proof timber, were at two of the angles; the house of the friars at the third; the forge and magazine at the fourth; and the tents of La Salle and Tonty in the area within.

Hennepin laments the failure of wine, which prevented him from saying mass; but every morning and evening he summoned the men to his cabin to listen to prayers and preaching, and on Sundays and fête-days they chanted vespers. Father Zenobe usually spent the day in the Indian camp, striving, with very indifferent success, to win them to the Faith, and to overcome the disgust with which their manners and habits inspired him.

Such was the first civilized occupation of the region which now forms the State of Illinois. La Salle christened his new fort Fort Crèvecœur. The name tells of disaster and suffering, but does no justice to the iron-hearted constancy of the sufferer. Up to this time he had clung to the hope that his vessel, the "Griffin," might still be safe. Her safety was vital to his enterprise. She had on board articles of the last necessity to him, including the rigging and anchors of another vessel which he was to build at Fort Crèvecœur, in order to descend the Mississippi and sail thence to the West Indies. But now his last hope had well-nigh vanished. Past all reasonable

doubt, the "Griffin" was lost; and in her loss he and all his plans seemed ruined alike.

Nothing, indeed, was ever heard of her. Indians, fur-traders, and even Jesuits, have been charged with contriving her destruction. Some say that the Ottawas boarded and burned her, after murdering those on board; others accuse the Pottawattamies; others affirm that her own crew scuttled and sunk her; others, again, that she foundered in a storm.<sup>1</sup> As for La Salle, the belief grew in him to a settled conviction that she had been treacherously sunk by the pilot and the sailors to whom he had intrusted her; and he thought he had found evidence that the authors of the crime, laden with the merchandise they had taken from her, had reached the Mississippi and ascended it, hoping to join Du Lhut, a famous chief of *coureurs de bois*, and enrich themselves by traffic with the northern tribes.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Charlevoix, i. 459; La Potherie, ii. 140; La Hontan, *Memoir on the Fur-Trade of Canada*. I am indebted for a copy of this paper to Winthrop Sargent, Esq., who purchased the original at the sale of the library of the poet Southey. Like Hennepin, La Hontan went over to the English; and this memoir is written in their interest.

<sup>2</sup> *Lettre de La Salle à La Barre, Chicagou, 4 Juin, 1683*. This is a long letter, addressed to the successor of Frontenac in the government of Canada. La Salle says that a young Indian belonging to him told him that three years before he saw a white man, answering the description of the pilot, a prisoner among a tribe beyond the Mississippi. He had been captured with four others on that river, while making his way with canoes, laden with goods, towards the Sioux. His companions had been killed. Other circumstances, which La Salle details at great length, convinced him that the white prisoner was no other than the pilot of the "Griffin." The evidence, however, is not conclusive.

But whether her lading was swallowed in the depths of the lake, or lost in the clutches of traitors, the evil was alike past remedy. She was gone, it mattered little how. The main-stay of the enterprise was broken; yet its inflexible chief lost neither heart nor hope. One path, beset with hardships and terrors, still lay open to him. He might return on foot to Fort Frontenac, and bring thence the needful succors.

La Salle felt deeply the dangers of such a step. His men were uneasy, discontented, and terrified by the stories with which the jealous Illinois still constantly filled their ears, of the whirlpools and the monsters of the Mississippi. He dreaded lest, in his absence, they should follow the example of their comrades, and desert. In the midst of his anxieties, a lucky accident gave him the means of disabusing them. He was hunting, one day, near the fort, when he met a young Illinois on his way home, half-starved, from a distant war excursion. He had been absent so long that he knew nothing of what had passed between his countrymen and the French. La Salle gave him a turkey he had shot, invited him to the fort, fed him, and made him presents. Having thus warmed his heart, he questioned him, with apparent carelessness, as to the countries he had visited, and especially as to the Mississippi, — on which the young warrior, seeing no reason to disguise the truth, gave him all the information he required. La Salle now made him the present of a hatchet, to

engage him to say nothing of what had passed, and, leaving him in excellent humor, repaired, with some of his followers, to the Illinois camp. Here he found the chiefs seated at a feast of bear's meat, and he took his place among them on a mat of rushes. After a pause, he charged them with having deceived him in regard to the Mississippi; adding that he knew the river perfectly, having been instructed concerning it by the Master of Life. He then described it to them with so much accuracy that his astonished hearers, conceiving that he owed his knowledge to "medicine," or sorcery, clapped their hands to their mouths in sign of wonder, and confessed that all they had said was but an artifice, inspired by their earnest desire that he should remain among them.<sup>1</sup> On this, La Salle's men took heart again; and their courage rose still more when, soon after, a band of Chickasa, Arkansas, and Osage warriors, from the Mississippi, came to the camp on a friendly visit, and assured the French not only that the river was navigable to the sea, but that the tribes along its banks would give them a warm welcome.

La Salle had now good reason to hope that his followers would neither mutiny nor desert in his absence. One chief purpose of his intended journey was to procure the anchors, cables, and rigging of

<sup>1</sup> *Relation des Découvertes et des Voyages du Sr. de la Salle, Seigneur et Gouverneur du Fort de Frontenac, au delà des grands Lacs de la Nouvelle France, faits par ordre de Monseigneur Colbert, 1679, 80 et 81.* Hennepin gives a story which is not essentially different, except that he makes himself a conspicuous actor in it.

the vessel which he meant to build at Fort Crèvecœur, and he resolved to see her on the stocks before he set out. This was no easy matter, for the pit-sawyers had deserted. "Seeing," he writes, "that I should lose a year if I waited to get others from Montreal, I said one day, before my people, that I was so vexed to find that the absence of two sawyers would defeat my plans and make all my trouble useless, that I was resolved to try to saw the planks myself, if I could find a single man who would help me with a will." Hereupon, two men stepped forward and promised to do their best. They were tolerably successful, and, the rest being roused to emulation, the work went on with such vigor that within six weeks the hull of the vessel was half finished. She was of forty tons' burden, and was built with high bulwarks, to protect those on board from Indian arrows.

La Salle now bethought him that, in his absence, he might get from Hennepin service of more value than his sermons; and he requested him to descend the Illinois, and explore it to its mouth. The friar, though hardy and daring, would fain have excused himself, alleging a troublesome bodily infirmity; but his venerable colleague Ribourde, himself too old for the journey, urged him to go, telling him that if he died by the way, his apostolic labors would redound to the glory of God. Membré had been living for some time in the Indian camp, and was thoroughly out of humor with the objects of his missionary



efforts, of whose obduracy and filth he bitterly complained. Hennepin proposed to take his place, while he should assume the Mississippi adventure; but this Membré declined, preferring to remain where he was. Hennepin now reluctantly accepted the proposed task. "Anybody but me," he says, with his usual modesty, "would have been very much frightened at the dangers of such a journey; and, in fact, if I had not placed all my trust in God, I should not have been the dupe of the Sieur de la Salle, who exposed my life rashly."<sup>1</sup>

On the last day of February, Hennepin's canoe lay at the water's edge; and the party gathered on the bank to bid him farewell. He had two companions, — Michel Accau, and a man known as the Picard du Gay,<sup>2</sup> though his real name was Antoine Auguel. The canoe was well laden with gifts for the Indians, — tobacco, knives, beads, awls, and other goods, to a very considerable value, supplied at La Salle's cost; "and, in fact," observes Hennepin, "he is liberal enough towards his friends."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> All the above is from Hennepin; and it seems to be marked by his characteristic egotism. It appears, from La Salle's letters, that Accau was the real chief of the party; that their orders were to explore not only the Illinois, but also a part of the Mississippi; and that Hennepin volunteered to go with the others. Accau was chosen because he spoke several Indian languages.

<sup>2</sup> An eminent writer has mistaken "Picard" for a personal name. Du Gay was called "Le Picard," because he came from the province of Picardy.

<sup>3</sup> (1683), 188. This commendation is suppressed in the later editions.

The friar bade farewell to La Salle, and embraced all the rest in turn. Father Ribourde gave him his benediction. "Be of good courage and let your heart be comforted," said the excellent old missionary, as he spread his hands in benediction over the shaven crown of the reverend traveller. Du Gay and Accau plied their paddles; the canoe receded, and vanished at length behind the forest. We will follow Hennepin hereafter on his adventures, imaginary and real. Meanwhile, we will trace the footsteps of his chief, urging his way, in the storms of winter, through those vast and gloomy wilds, — those realms of famine, treachery, and death, — that lay betwixt him and his far-distant goal of Fort Frontenac.

On the first of March,<sup>1</sup> before the frost was yet out of the ground, when the forest was still leafless, and the oozy prairies still patched with snow, a band of discontented men were again gathered on the shore for another leave-taking. Hard by, the unfinished ship lay on the stocks, white and fresh from the saw and axe, ceaselessly reminding them of the hardship and peril that was in store. Here you would have seen the calm, impenetrable face of La Salle, and with him the Mohegan hunter, who seems to have felt towards him that admiring attachment which he could always inspire in his Indian retainers. Besides the Mohegan, four Frenchmen were to accompany him, — Hunaut, La Violette, Collin, and Dautray.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Tonty erroneously places their departure on the twenty-second.

<sup>2</sup> *Déclaration faite par Moyse Hillaret, charpentier de barque.*

His parting with Tonty was an anxious one, for each well knew the risks that environed both. Embarking with his followers in two canoes, he made his way upward amid the drifting ice; while the faithful Italian, with two or three honest men and twelve or thirteen knaves, remained to hold Fort Crève-cœur in his absence.

## CHAPTER XIV.

1680.

### HARDIHOOD OF LA SALLE.

THE WINTER JOURNEY. — THE DESERTED TOWN. — STARVED ROCK. — LAKE MICHIGAN. — THE WILDERNESS. — WAR PARTIES. — LA SALLE'S MEN GIVE OUT. — ILL TIDINGS. — MUTINY. — CHASTISEMENT OF THE MUTINEERS.

LA SALLE well knew what was before him, and nothing but necessity spurred him to this desperate journey. He says that he could trust nobody else to go in his stead, and that unless the articles lost in the "Griffin" were replaced without delay, the expedition would be retarded a full year, and he and his associates consumed by its expenses. "Therefore," he writes to one of them, "though the thaws of approaching spring greatly increased the difficulty of the way, interrupted as it was everywhere by marshes and rivers, to say nothing of the length of the journey, which is about five hundred leagues in a direct line, and the danger of meeting Indians of four or five different nations through whose country we were to pass, as well as an Iroquois army which we knew was coming that way; though we must suffer all the

time from hunger; sleep on the open ground, and often without food; watch by night and march by day, loaded with baggage, such as blanket, clothing, kettle, hatchet, gun, powder, lead, and skins to make moccasins; sometimes pushing through thickets, sometimes climbing rocks covered with ice and snow, sometimes wading whole days through marshes where the water was waist-deep or even more, at a season when the snow was not entirely melted, — though I knew all this, it did not prevent me from resolving to go on foot to Fort Frontenac, to learn for myself what had become of my vessel, and bring back the things we needed.”<sup>1</sup>

The winter had been a severe one; and when, an hour after leaving the fort, he and his companions reached the still water of Peoria Lake, they found it sheeted with ice from shore to shore. They carried their canoes up the bank, made two rude sledges, placed the light vessels upon them, and dragged them to the upper end of the lake, where they encamped. In the morning they found the river still covered with ice, too weak to bear them and too strong to permit them to break a way for the canoes. They spent the whole day in carrying them through the woods, toiling knee-deep in saturated snow. Rain fell in floods, and they took shelter at night in a deserted Indian hut.

In the morning, the third of March, they dragged

<sup>1</sup> *Lettre de La Salle à un de ses associés (Thouret ?), 29 Sept., 1680 (Margry, ii. 50).*

their canoes half a league farther; then launched them, and, breaking the ice with clubs and hatchets, forced their way slowly up the stream. Again their progress was barred, and again they took to the woods, toiling onward till a tempest of moist, half-liquid snow forced them to bivouac for the night. A sharp frost followed, and in the morning the white waste around them was glazed with a dazzling crust. Now, for the first time, they could use their snow-shoes. Bending to their work, dragging their canoes, which glided smoothly over the polished surface, they journeyed on hour after hour and league after league, till they reached at length the great town of the Illinois, still void of its inhabitants.<sup>1</sup>

It was a desolate and lonely scene, — the river gliding dark and cold between its banks of rushes; the empty lodges, covered with crusted snow; the vast white meadows; the distant cliffs, bearded with shining icicles; and the hills wrapped in forests, which glittered from afar with the icy incrustations that cased each frozen twig. Yet there was life in the savage landscape. The men saw buffalo wading in the snow, and they killed one of them. More than this: they discovered the tracks of moccasins. They cut rushes by the edge of the river, piled them on the bank, and set them on fire, that the smoke might attract the eyes of savages roaming near.

<sup>1</sup> Membré says that he was in the town at the time; but this could hardly have been the case. He was, in all probability, among the Illinois, in their camp near Fort Crèvecoeur.

On the following day, while the hunters were smoking the meat of the buffalo, La Salle went out to reconnoitre, and presently met three Indians, one of whom proved to be Chassagoac, the principal chief of the Illinois.<sup>1</sup> La Salle brought them to his bivouac, feasted them, gave them a red blanket, a kettle, and some knives and hatchets, made friends with them, promised to restrain the Iroquois from attacking them, told them that he was on his way to the settlements to bring arms and ammunition to defend them against their enemies, and, as the result of these advances, gained from the chief a promise that he would send provisions to Tonty's party at Fort Crèvecœur.

After several days spent at the deserted town, La Salle prepared to resume his journey. Before his departure, his attention was attracted to the remarkable cliff of yellow sandstone, now called Starved Rock, a mile or more above the village, — a natural fortress, which a score of resolute white men might make good against a host of savages; and he soon afterwards sent Tonty an order to examine it, and make it his stronghold in case of need.<sup>2</sup>

On the fifteenth the party set out again, carried

<sup>1</sup> The same whom Hennepin calls Chassagouasse. He was brother of the chief, Nicanopé, who, in his absence, had feasted the French on the day after the nocturnal council with Monso. Chassagoac was afterwards baptized by Membré or Ribourde, but soon relapsed into the superstitious of his people, and died, as the former tells us, "doubly a child of perdition." See Le Clerc, ii. 181.

<sup>2</sup> Tonty, *Mémoire*. The order was sent by two Frenchmen, whom La Salle met on Lake Michigan.



their canoes along the bank of the river as far as the rapids above Ottawa, then launched them and pushed their way upward, battling with the floating ice, which, loosened by a warm rain, drove down the swollen current in sheets. On the eighteenth they reached a point some miles below the site of Joliet, and here found the river once more completely closed. Despairing of farther progress by water, they hid their canoes on an island, and struck across the country for Lake Michigan.

It was the worst of all seasons for such a journey. The nights were cold, but the sun was warm at noon, and the half-thawed prairie was one vast tract of mud, water, and discolored, half-liquid snow. On the twenty-second they crossed marshes and inundated meadows, wading to the knee, till at noon they were stopped by a river, perhaps the Calumet. They made a raft of hard-wood timber, for there was no other, and shoved themselves across. On the next day they could see Lake Michigan dimly glimmering beyond the waste of woods; and, after crossing three swollen streams, they reached it at evening. On the twenty-fourth they followed its shore, till, at nightfall, they arrived at the fort which they had built in the autumn at the mouth of the St. Joseph. Here La Salle found Chapelle and Leblanc, the two men whom he had sent from hence to Michilimackinac, in search of the "Griffin."<sup>1</sup> They reported that they had made the circuit of the lake, and had neither

<sup>1</sup> *Déclaration de Moyse Hillaret; Relation des Découvertes.*

seen her nor heard tidings of her. Assured of her fate, he ordered them to rejoin Tonty at Fort Crèvecœur; while he pushed onward with his party through the unknown wild of Southern Michigan.

"The rain," says La Salle, "which lasted all day, and the raft we were obliged to make to cross the river, stopped us till noon of the twenty-fifth, when we continued our march through the woods, which was so interlaced with thorns and brambles that in two days and a half our clothes were all torn, and our faces so covered with blood that we hardly knew each other. On the twenty-eighth we found the woods more open, and began to fare better, meeting a good deal of game, which after this rarely failed us; so that we no longer carried provisions with us, but made a meal of roast meat wherever we happened to kill a deer, bear, or turkey. These are the choicest feasts on a journey like this; and till now we had generally gone without them, so that we had often walked all day without breakfast.

"The Indians do not hunt in this region, which is debatable ground between five or six nations who are at war, and, being afraid of each other, do not venture into these parts except to surprise each other, and always with the greatest precaution and all possible secrecy. The reports of our guns and the carcasses of the animals we killed soon led some of them to find our trail. In fact, on the evening of the twenty-eighth, having made our fire by the edge of a prairie, we were surrounded by them; but as the

man on guard waked us, and we posted ourselves behind trees with our guns, these savages, who are called Wapoos, took us for Iroquois, and thinking that there must be a great many of us because we did not travel secretly, as they do when in small bands, they ran off without shooting their arrows, and gave the alarm to their comrades, so that we were two days without meeting anybody."

La Salle guessed the cause of their fright; and, in order to confirm their delusion, he drew with charcoal, on the trunks of trees from which he had stripped the bark, the usual marks of an Iroquois war-party, with signs for prisoners and for scalps, after the custom of those dreaded warriors. This ingenious artifice, as will soon appear, was near proving the destruction of the whole party. He also set fire to the dry grass of the prairies over which he and his men had just passed, thus destroying the traces of their passage. "We practised this device every night, and it answered very well so long as we were passing over an open country; but on the thirtieth we got into great marshes, flooded by the thaws, and were obliged to cross them in mud or water up to the waist; so that our tracks betrayed us to a band of Mascoutins who were out after Iroquois. They followed us through these marshes during the three days we were crossing them; but we made no fire at night, contenting ourselves with taking off our wet clothes and wrapping ourselves in our blankets on some dry knoll, where we slept till morning. At

last, on the night of the second of April, there came a hard frost, and our clothes, which were drenched when we took them off, froze stiff as sticks, so that we could not put them on in the morning without making a fire to thaw them. The fire betrayed us to the Indians, who were encamped across the marsh; and they ran towards us with loud cries, till they were stopped halfway by a stream so deep that they could not get over, the ice which had formed in the night not being strong enough to bear them. We went to meet them, within gun-shot; and whether our fire-arms frightened them, or whether they thought us more numerous than we were, or whether they really meant us no harm, they called out, in the Illinois language, that they had taken us for Iroquois, but now saw that we were friends and brothers; whereupon, they went off as they came, and we kept on our way till the fourth, when two of my men fell ill and could not walk."

In this emergency, La Salle went in search of some watercourse by which they might reach Lake Erie, and soon came upon a small river, which was probably the Huron. Here, while the sick men rested, their companions made a canoe. There were no birch-trees; and they were forced to use elm-bark, which at that early season would not slip freely from the wood until they loosened it with hot water. Their canoe being made, they embarked in it, and for a time floated prosperously down the stream, when at length the way was barred by a matted

barricade of trees fallen across the water. The sick men could now walk again, and, pushing eastward through the forest, the party soon reached the banks of the Detroit.

La Salle directed two of the men to make a canoe, and go to Michilimackinac, the nearest harborage. With the remaining two, he crossed the Detroit on a raft, and, striking a direct line across the country, reached Lake Erie not far from Point Pelée. Snow, sleet, and rain pelted them with little intermission; and when, after a walk of about thirty miles, they gained the lake, the Mohegan and one of the Frenchmen were attacked with fever and spitting of blood. Only one man now remained in health. With his aid, La Salle made another canoe, and, embarking the invalids, pushed for Niagara. It was Easter Monday when they landed at a cabin of logs above the cataract, probably on the spot where the "Griffin" was built. Here several of La Salle's men had been left the year before, and here they still remained. They told him woful news. Not only had he lost the "Griffin," and her lading of ten thousand crowns in value, but a ship from France, freighted with his goods, valued at more than twenty-two thousand livres, had been totally wrecked at the mouth of the St. Lawrence; and of twenty hired men on their way from Europe to join him, some had been detained by his enemy, the Intendant Duchesneau, while all but four of the remainder, being told that he was dead, had found means to return home.

His three followers were all unfit for travel: he alone retained his strength and spirit. Taking with him three fresh men at Niagara, he resumed his journey, and on the sixth of May descried, looming through floods of rain, the familiar shores of his seigniory and the bastioned walls of Fort Frontenac. During sixty-five days he had toiled almost incessantly, travelling, by the course he took, about a thousand miles through a country beset with every form of peril and obstruction, — “the most arduous journey,” says the chronicler, “ever made by Frenchmen in America.”

Such was Cavelier de la Salle. In him, an unconquerable mind held at its service a frame of iron, and tasked it to the utmost of its endurance. The pioneer of western pioneers was no rude son of toil, but a man of thought, trained amid arts and letters.<sup>1</sup> He had reached his goal; but for him there was neither rest nor peace. Man and Nature seemed in arms against him. His agents had plundered him; his creditors had seized his property; and several of his canoes, richly laden, had been lost in the rapids of the St. Lawrence.<sup>2</sup> He hastened to Montreal, where

<sup>1</sup> A Rocky Mountain trapper, being complimented on the hardihood of himself and his companions, once said to the writer, “That’s so; but a gentleman of the right sort will stand hardship better than anybody else.” The history of Arctic and African travel and the military records of all time are a standing evidence that a trained and developed mind is not the enemy, but the active and powerful ally, of constitutional hardihood. The culture that enervates instead of strengthening is always a false or a partial one.

<sup>2</sup> Zenobe Membré in *Le Clerc*, ii. 202.



his sudden advent caused great astonishment; and where, despite his crippled resources and damaged credit, he succeeded, within a week, in gaining the supplies which he required and the needful succors for the forlorn band on the Illinois. He had returned to Fort Frontenac, and was on the point of embarking for their relief, when a blow fell upon him more disheartening than any that had preceded.

On the twenty-second of July, two *voyageurs*, Messier and Laurent, came to him with a letter from Tonty, who wrote that soon after La Salle's departure nearly all the men had deserted, after destroying Fort Crèvecœur, plundering the magazine, and throwing into the river all the arms, goods, and stores which they could not carry off. The messengers who brought this letter were speedily followed by two of the *habitants* of Fort Frontenac, who had been trading on the lakes, and who, with a fidelity which the unhappy La Salle rarely knew how to inspire, had travelled day and night to bring him their tidings. They reported that they had met the deserters, and that, having been reinforced by recruits gained at Michilimackinac and Niagara, they now numbered twenty men.<sup>1</sup> They had destroyed the fort on the

<sup>1</sup> When La Salle was at Niagara, in April, he had ordered Dautray, the best of the men who had accompanied him from the Illinois, to return thither as soon as he was able. Four men from Niagara were to go with him and he was to rejoin Tonty with such supplies as that post could furnish. Dautray set out accordingly, but was met on the lakes by the deserters, who told him that Tonty was dead, and seduced his men. (*Relation des Découvertes.*) Dau-



St. Joseph, seized a quantity of furs belonging to La Salle at Michilimackinac, and plundered the magazine at Niagara. Here they had separated, eight of them coasting the south side of Lake Ontario to find harborage at Albany, a common refuge at that time of this class of scoundrels; while the remaining twelve, in three canoes, made for Fort Frontenac along the north shore, intending to kill La Salle as the surest means of escaping punishment.

He lost no time in lamentation. Of the few men at his command he chose nine of the trustiest, embarked with them in canoes, and went to meet the marauders. After passing the Bay of Quinté, he took his station with five of his party at a point of land suited to his purpose, and detached the remaining four to keep watch. In the morning, two canoes were discovered approaching without suspicion, one of them far in advance of the other. As the foremost drew near, La Salle's canoe darted out from under the leafy shore, — two of the men handling the paddles, while he, with the remaining two, levelled their guns at the deserters, and called on them to surrender. Astonished and dismayed, they yielded at once; while two more, who were in the second canoe, hastened to follow their example. La Salle now returned to the fort with his prisoners, placed

tray himself seems to have remained true; at least, he was in La Salle's service immediately after, and was one of his most trusted followers. He was of good birth, being the son of Jean Bourdon, a conspicuous personage in the early period of the colony; and his name appears on official records as Jean Bourdon, Sieur d'Autray.

them in custody, and again set forth. He met the third canoe upon the lake at about six o'clock in the evening. His men vainly plied their paddles in pursuit. The mutineers reached the shore, took post among rocks and trees, levelled their guns, and showed fight. Four of La Salle's men made a circuit to gain their rear and dislodge them, on which they stole back to their canoe and tried to escape in the darkness. They were pursued, and summoned to yield; but they replied by aiming their guns at their pursuers, who instantly gave them a volley, killed two of them, and captured the remaining three. Like their companions, they were placed in custody at the fort, to await the arrival of Count Frontenac.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> La Salle's long letter, written apparently to his associate Thouret, and dated 29 Sept., 1680, is the chief authority for the above. The greater part of this letter is incorporated, almost verbatim, in the official narrative called *Relation des Découvertes*. Hennepin, Membre, and Tonty also speak of the journey from Fort Crèvecoeur. The death of the two mutineers was used by La Salle's enemies as the basis of a charge of murder.

## CHAPTER XV.

1680.

### INDIAN CONQUERORS.

THE ENTERPRISE RENEWED.—ATTEMPT TO RESCUE TONTY.—BUFFALO.—A FRIGHTFUL DISCOVERY.—IROQUOIS FURY.—THE RUINED TOWN.—A NIGHT OF HORROR.—TRACES OF THE INVADERS.—NO NEWS OF TONTY.

AND now La Salle's work must be begun afresh. He had staked all, and all had seemingly been lost. In stern, relentless effort he had touched the limits of human endurance; and the harvest of his toil was disappointment, disaster, and impending ruin. The shattered fabric of his enterprise was prostrate in the dust. His friends desponded; his foes were blatant and exultant. Did he bend before the storm? No human eye could pierce the depths of his reserved and haughty nature; but the surface was calm, and no sign betrayed a shaken resolve or an altered purpose. Where weaker men would have abandoned all in despairing apathy, he turned anew to his work with the same vigor and the same apparent confidence as if borne on the full tide of success.

His best hope was in Tonty. Could that brave and true-hearted officer and the three or four faithful

men who had remained with him make good their foothold on the Illinois, and save from destruction the vessel on the stocks and the forge and tools so laboriously carried thither, then a basis was left on which the ruined enterprise might be built up once more. There was no time to lose. Tonty must be succored soon, or succor would come too late. La Salle had already provided the necessary material, and a few days sufficed to complete his preparations. On the tenth of August he embarked again for the Illinois. With him went his lieutenant La Forest, who held of him in fief an island, then called Belle Isle, opposite Fort Frontenac.<sup>1</sup> A surgeon, ship-carpenters, joiners, masons, soldiers, *voyageurs*, and laborers completed his company, twenty-five men in all, with everything needful for the outfit of the vessel.

His route, though difficult, was not so long as that which he had followed the year before. He ascended the river Humber; crossed to Lake Simcoe, and thence descended the Severn to the Georgian Bay of Lake Huron; followed its eastern shore, coasted the Manitoulin Islands, and at length reached Michilimackinac. Here, as usual, all was hostile; and he had great difficulty in inducing the Indians, who had been excited against him, to sell him provisions. Anxious to reach his destination, he pushed forward with twelve men, leaving La Forest to bring on the

<sup>1</sup> *Robert Cavelier, Sr. de la Salle, à François Daupin, Sr. de la Forest, 10 Juin, 1679.*

rest. On the fourth of November<sup>1</sup> he reached the ruined fort at the mouth of the St. Joseph, and left five of his party, with the heavy stores, to wait till La Forest should come up, while he himself hastened forward with six Frenchmen and an Indian. A deep anxiety possessed him. The rumor, current for months past, that the Iroquois, bent on destroying the Illinois, were on the point of invading their country had constantly gained strength. Here was a new disaster, which, if realized, might involve him and his enterprise in irretrievable wreck.

He ascended the St. Joseph, crossed the portage to the Kankakee, and followed its course downward till it joined the northern branch of the Illinois. He had heard nothing of Tonty on the way, and neither here nor elsewhere could he discover the smallest sign of the passage of white men. His friend, therefore, if alive, was probably still at his post; and he pursued his course with a mind lightened, in some small measure, of its load of anxiety.

When last he had passed here, all was solitude; but now the scene was changed. The boundless waste was thronged with life. He beheld that wondrous spectacle, still to be seen at times on the plains of the remotest West, and the memory of which can quicken the pulse and stir the blood after

<sup>1</sup> This date is from the *Relation*. Membreé says the twenty-eighth; but he is wrong, by his own showing, as he says that the party reached the Illinois village on the first of December, which would be an impossibility.

the lapse of years: far and near, the prairie was alive with buffalo; now like black specks dotting the distant swells; now trampling by in ponderous columns, or filing in long lines, morning, noon, and night, to drink at the river, — wading, plunging, and snorting in the water; climbing the muddy shores, and staring with wild eyes at the passing canoes. It was an opportunity not to be lost. The party landed, and encamped for a hunt. Sometimes they hid under the shelving bank, and shot them as they came to drink; sometimes, flat on their faces, they dragged themselves through the long dead grass, till the savage bulls, guardians of the herd, ceased their grazing, raised their huge heads, and glared through tangled hair at the dangerous intruders. The hunt was successful. In three days the hunters killed twelve buffalo, besides deer, geese, and swans. They cut the meat into thin flakes, and dried it in the sun or in the smoke of their fires. The men were in high spirits, — delighting in the sport, and rejoicing in the prospect of relieving Tonty and his hungry followers with a plentiful supply.

They embarked again, and soon approached the great town of the Illinois. The buffalo were far behind; and once more the canoes glided on their way through a voiceless solitude. No hunters were seen; no saluting whoop greeted their ears. They passed the cliff afterwards called the Rock of St. Louis, where La Salle had ordered Tonty to build his stronghold; but as he scanned its lofty top he

saw no palisades, no cabins, no sign of human hand, and still its primeval crest of forests overhung the gliding river. Now the meadow opened before them where the great town had stood. They gazed, astonished and confounded: all was desolation. The town had vanished, and the meadow was black with fire. They plied their paddles, hastened to the spot, landed; and as they looked around their cheeks grew white, and the blood was frozen in their veins.

Before them lay a plain once swarming with wild human life and covered with Indian dwellings, now a waste of devastation and death, strewn with heaps of ashes, and bristling with the charred poles and stakes which had formed the framework of the lodges. At the points of most of them were stuck human skulls, half picked by birds of prey.<sup>1</sup> Near at hand was the burial-ground of the village. The travellers sickened with horror as they entered its revolting precincts. Wolves in multitudes fled at their approach; while clouds of crows or buzzards, rising from the hideous repast, wheeled above their heads, or settled on the naked branches of the neighboring forest. Every grave had been rifled, and the bodies flung down from the scaffolds where, after the Illinois custom, many of them had been placed. The field was strewn with broken bones and torn and

<sup>1</sup> "Il ne restoit que quelques bouts de perches brulées qui mon-  
troient quelle avoit été l'étendue du village, et sur la plupart des-  
quelles il y avoit des têtes de morts plantées et mangées des cor-  
beaux." — *Relation des Découvertes du Sr. de la Salle.*



mangled corpses. A hyena warfare had been waged against the dead. La Salle knew the handiwork of the Iroquois. The threatened blow had fallen, and the wolfish hordes of the five cantons had fleshed their rabid fangs in a new victim.<sup>1</sup>

Not far distant, the conquerors had made a rude fort of trunks, boughs, and roots of trees laid together to form a circular enclosure; and this, too, was garnished with skulls, stuck on the broken branches and protruding sticks. The *caches*, or subterranean store-houses of the villagers, had been broken open and the contents scattered. The cornfields were laid waste, and much of the corn thrown into heaps and half burned. As La Salle surveyed this scene of havoc, one thought engrossed him: where were Tonty and his men? He searched the Iroquois fort: there were abundant traces of its savage occupants, and, among them, a few fragments of French cloth-

<sup>1</sup> "Beaucoup de carcasses à demi rongées par les loups, les sépulchres démolis, les os tirés de leurs fosses et épars par la campagne; . . . enfin les loups et les corbeaux augmentoient encore par leurs hurlemens et par leurs cris l'horreur de ce spectacle." — *Relation des Découvertes du Sr. de la Salle*.

The above may seem exaggerated; but it accords perfectly with what is well established concerning the ferocious character of the Iroquois and the nature of their warfare. Many other tribes have frequently made war upon the dead. I have myself known an instance in which five corpses of Sioux Indians placed in trees, after the practice of the Western bands of that people, were thrown down and kicked in fragments by a war party of the Crows, who then held the muzzles of their guns against the skulls, and blew them to pieces. This happened near the head of the Platte, in the summer of 1846. Yet the Crows are much less ferocious than were the Iroquois in La Salle's time.

ing. He examined the skulls; but the hair, portions of which clung to nearly all of them, was in every case that of an Indian. Evening came on before he had finished the search. The sun set, and the wilderness sank to its savage rest. Night and silence brooded over the waste, where, far as the raven could wing his flight, stretched the dark domain of solitude and horror.

Yet there was no silence at the spot where La Salle and his companions made their bivouac. The howling of the wolves filled the air with fierce and dreary dissonance. More dangerous foes were not far off, for before nightfall they had seen fresh Indian tracks; "but, as it was very cold," says La Salle, "this did not prevent us from making a fire and lying down by it, each of us keeping watch in turn. I spent the night in a distress which you can imagine better than I can write it; and I did not sleep a moment with trying to make up my mind as to what I ought to do. My ignorance as to the position of those I was looking after, and my uncertainty as to what would become of the men who were to follow me with La Forest if they arrived at the ruined village and did not find me there, made me apprehend every sort of trouble and disaster. At last, I decided to keep on my way down the river, leaving some of my men behind in charge of the goods, which it was not only useless but dangerous to carry with me, because we should be forced to abandon them when the winter fairly set in, which would be very soon."

This resolution was due to a discovery he had made the evening before, which offered, as he thought, a possible clew to the fate of Tonty and the men with him. He thus describes it: "Near the garden of the Indians, which was on the meadows, a league from the village and not far from the river, I found six pointed stakes set in the ground and painted red. On each of them was the figure of a man with bandaged eyes, drawn in black. As the savages often set stakes of this sort where they have killed people, I thought, by their number and position, that when the Iroquois came, the Illinois, finding our men alone in the hut near their garden, had either killed them or made them prisoners. And I was confirmed in this, because, seeing no signs of a battle, I supposed that on hearing of the approach of the Iroquois, the old men and other non-combatants had fled, and that the young warriors had remained behind to cover their flight, and afterwards followed, taking the French with them; while the Iroquois, finding nobody to kill, had vented their fury on the corpses in the graveyard."

Uncertain as was the basis of this conjecture, and feeble as was the hope it afforded, it determined him to push forward, in order to learn more. When daylight returned, he told his purpose to his followers, and directed three of them to await his return near the ruined village. They were to hide themselves on an island, conceal their fire at night, make no smoke by day, fire no guns, and keep a close

watch. Should the rest of the party arrive, they, too, were to wait with similar precautions. The baggage was placed in a hollow of the rocks, at a place difficult of access; and, these arrangements made, La Salle set out on his perilous journey with the four remaining men, Dautray, Hunaut, You, and the Indian. Each was armed with two guns, a pistol, and a sword; and a number of hatchets and other goods were placed in the canoe, as presents for Indians whom they might meet.

Several leagues below the village they found, on their right hand close to the river, a sort of island, made inaccessible by the marshes and water which surrounded it. Here the flying Illinois had sought refuge with their women and children, and the place was full of their deserted huts. On the left bank, exactly opposite, was an abandoned camp of the Iroquois. On the level meadow stood a hundred and thirteen huts, and on the forest trees which covered the hills behind were carved the totems, or insignia, of the chiefs, together with marks to show the number of followers which each had led to the war. La Salle counted five hundred and eighty-two warriors. He found marks, too, for the Illinois killed or captured, but none to indicate that any of the Frenchmen had shared their fate.

As they descended the river, they passed, on the same day, six abandoned camps of the Illinois; and opposite to each was a camp of the invaders. The former, it was clear, had retreated in a body; while

the Iroquois had followed their march, day by day, along the other bank. La Salle and his men pushed rapidly onward, passed Peoria Lake, and soon reached Fort Crèvecœur, which they found, as they expected, demolished by the deserters. The vessel on the stocks was still left entire, though the Iroquois had found means to draw out the iron nails and spikes. On one of the planks were written the words: "*Nous sommes tous sauvages: ce 15, 1680,*"—the work, no doubt, of the knaves who had pillaged and destroyed the fort.

La Salle and his companions hastened on, and during the following day passed four opposing camps of the savage armies. The silence of death now reigned along the deserted river, whose lonely borders, wrapped deep in forests, seemed lifeless as the grave. As they drew near the mouth of the stream they saw a meadow on their right, and on its farthest verge several human figures, erect, yet motionless. They landed, and cautiously examined the place. The long grass was trampled down, and all around were strewn the relics of the hideous orgies which formed the ordinary sequel of an Iroquois victory. The figures they had seen were the half-consumed bodies of women, still bound to the stakes where they had been tortured. Other sights there were, too revolting for record.<sup>1</sup> All the remains were those

<sup>1</sup> "On ne sçauroit exprimer la rage de ces furieux ni les tourmens qu'ils avoient fait souffrir aux misérables Tamaroa [*a tribe of the Illinois*]. Il y en avoit encore dans des chaudières qu'ils avoient laissées pleines sur les feux, qui depuis s'étoient éteints," etc., etc. — *Relation des Découvertes.*

of women and children. The men, it seemed, had fled, and left them to their fate.

Here, again, La Salle sought long and anxiously, without finding the smallest sign that could indicate the presence of Frenchmen. Once more descending the river, they soon reached its mouth. Before them, a broad eddying current rolled swiftly on its way; and La Salle beheld the Mississippi, — the object of his day-dreams, the destined avenue of his ambition and his hopes. It was no time for reflections. The moment was too engrossing, too heavily charged with anxieties and cares. From a rock on the shore, he saw a tree stretched forward above the stream; and stripping off its bark to make it more conspicuous, he hung upon it a board on which he had drawn the figures of himself and his men, seated in their canoe, and bearing a pipe of peace. To this he tied a letter for Tonty, informing him that he had returned up the river to the ruined village.

His four men had behaved admirably throughout, and they now offered to continue the journey if he saw fit, and follow him to the sea; but he thought it useless to go farther, and was unwilling to abandon the three men whom he had ordered to await his return. Accordingly, they retraced their course, and, paddling at times both day and night, urged their canoe so swiftly that they reached the village in the incredibly short space of four days.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The distance is about two hundred and fifty miles. The letters of La Salle, as well as the official narrative compiled from



The sky was clear, and as night came on the travellers saw a prodigious comet blazing above this scene of desolation. On that night, it was chilling with a superstitious awe the hamlets of New England and the gilded chambers of Versailles; but it is characteristic of La Salle, that, beset as he was with perils and surrounded with ghastly images of death, he coolly notes down the phenomenon, not as a portentous messenger of war and woe, but rather as an object of scientific curiosity.<sup>1</sup>

He found his three men safely ensconced upon their island, where they were anxiously looking for his return. After collecting a store of half-burnt corn from the ravaged granaries of the Illinois, the whole party began to ascend the river, and on the sixth of January reached the junction of the Kankakee with the northern branch. On their way downward they had descended the former stream; they now chose the latter, and soon discovered, by the margin them, say that they left the village on the second of December, and returned to it on the eleventh, having left the mouth of the river on the seventh.

<sup>1</sup> This was the "Great Comet of 1680." Dr. B. A. Gould writes me: "It appeared in December, 1680, and was visible until the latter part of February, 1681, being especially brilliant in January." It was said to be the largest ever seen. By observations upon it, Newton demonstrated the regular revolutions of comets around the sun. "No comet," it is said, "has threatened the earth with a nearer approach than that of 1680." (*Winthrop on Comets, Lecture II.* p. 44.) Increase Mather, in his *Discourse concerning Comets*, printed at Boston in 1683, says of this one: "Its appearance was very terrible; the Blaze ascended above 60 Degrees almost to its Zenith." Mather thought it fraught with terrific portent to the nations of the earth.



of the water, a rude cabin of bark. La Salle landed and examined the spot, when an object met his eye which cheered him with a bright gleam of hope. It was but a piece of wood; but the wood had been cut with a saw. Tonty and his party, then, had passed this way, escaping from the carnage behind them. Unhappily, they had left no token of their passage at the fork of the two streams; and thus La Salle, on his voyage downward, had believed them to be still on the river below.

With rekindled hope, the travellers pursued their journey, leaving their canoes, and making their way overland towards the fort on the St. Joseph.

"Snow fell in extraordinary quantities all day," writes La Salle, "and it kept on falling for nineteen days in succession, with cold so severe that I never knew so hard a winter, even in Canada. We were obliged to cross forty leagues of open country, where we could hardly find wood to warm ourselves at evening, and could get no bark whatever to make a hut, so that we had to spend the night exposed to the furious winds which blow over these plains. I never suffered so much from cold, or had more trouble in getting forward; for the snow was so light, resting suspended as it were among the tall grass, that we could not use snowshoes. Sometimes it was waist deep; and as I walked before my men, as usual, to encourage them by breaking the path, I often had much ado, though I am rather tall, to lift my legs above the

drifts, through which I pushed by the weight of my body.”

At length they reached their goal, and found shelter and safety within the walls of Fort Miami. Here was the party left in charge of La Forest; but, to his surprise and grief, La Salle heard no tidings of Tonty. He found some amends for the disappointment in the fidelity and zeal of La Forest's men, who had restored the fort, cleared ground for planting, and even sawed the planks and timber for a new vessel on the lake.

And now, while La Salle rests at Fort Miami, let us trace the adventures which befell Tonty and his followers, after their chief's departure from Fort Crèvecoeur.

## CHAPTER XVI.

1680.

### TONTY AND THE IROQUOIS.

THE DESERTERS.—THE IROQUOIS WAR.—THE GREAT TOWN OF THE ILLINOIS.—THE ALARM.—ONSET OF THE IROQUOIS.—PERIL OF TONTY.—A TREACHEROUS TRUCE.—INTREPIDITY OF TONTY.—MURDER OF RIBOURDE.—WAR UPON THE DEAD.

WHEN La Salle set out on his rugged journey to Fort Frontenac, he left, as we have seen, fifteen men at Fort Crèveceur, — smiths, ship-carpenters, housewrights, and soldiers, besides his servant L'Espérance and the two friars Membré and Ribourde. Most of the men were ripe for mutiny. They had no interest in the enterprise, and no love for its chief. They were disgusted with the present, and terrified at the future. La Salle, too, was for the most part a stern commander, impenetrable and cold; and when he tried to soothe, conciliate, and encourage, his success rarely answered to the excellence of his rhetoric. He could always, however, inspire respect, if not love; but now the restraint of his presence was removed. He had not been long absent, when a fire-brand was thrown into the midst of the discontented and restless crew.

It may be remembered that La Salle had met two of his men, La Chapelle and Leblanc, at his fort on the St. Joseph, and ordered them to rejoin Tonty. Unfortunately, they obeyed. On arriving, they told their comrades that the "Griffin" was lost, that Fort Frontenac was seized by the creditors of La Salle, that he was ruined past recovery, and that they, the men, would never receive their pay. Their wages were in arrears for more than two years; and, indeed, it would have been folly to pay them before their return to the settlements, as to do so would have been a temptation to desert. Now, however, the effect on their minds was still worse, believing, as many of them did, that they would never be paid at all.

La Chapelle and his companion had brought a letter from La Salle to Tonty, directing him to examine and fortify the cliff so often mentioned, which overhung the river above the great Illinois village. Tonty, accordingly, set out on his errand with some of the men. In his absence, the malcontents destroyed the fort, stole powder, lead, furs, and provisions, and deserted, after writing on the side of the unfinished vessel the words seen by La Salle, "*Nous sommes tous sauvages.*"<sup>1</sup> The brave

<sup>1</sup> For the particulars of this desertion, Membré in Le Clerc, ii. 171, *Relation des Découvertes*; Tonty, *Mémoire*, 1684, 1693; *Déclaration faite par devant le Sr. Duchesneau, Intendant en Canada, par Moyse Hillaret, charpentier de barque cy-devant au service du Sr. de la Salle, Aoust, 1680.*

Moyse Hillaret, the "Maître Moyse" of Hennepin, was a ring-

young Sieur de Boisrondet and the servant L'Espérance hastened to carry the news to Tonty, who at once despatched four of those with him, by two different routes, to inform La Salle of the disaster.<sup>1</sup> Besides the two just named, there now remained with him only one hired man and the Récollet friars. With this feeble band, he was left among a horde of treacherous savages, who had been taught to regard him as a secret enemy. Resolved, apparently, to disarm their jealousy by a show of confidence, he took up his abode in the midst of them, making his quarters in the great village, whither, as spring opened, its inhabitants returned, to the number, according to Membré, of seven or eight thousand. Hither he conveyed the forge and such tools as he could recover, and here he hoped to maintain himself till La Salle should reappear. The spring and the summer were past, and he looked anxiously for his coming, unconscious that a storm was gathering in leader of the deserters, and seems to have been one of those captured by La Salle near Fort Frontenac. Twelve days after, Hillaret was examined by La Salle's enemy, the intendant; and this paper is the formal statement made by him. It gives the names of most of the men, and furnishes incidental confirmation of many statements of Hennepin, Tonty, Membré, and the *Relation des Découvertes*. Hillaret, Leblanc, and Le Meilleur, the blacksmith nicknamed La Forge, went off together, and the rest seem to have followed afterwards. Hillaret does not admit that any goods were wantonly destroyed.

There is before me a schedule of the debts of La Salle, made after his death. It includes a claim of this man for wages to the amount of 2,500 livres.

<sup>1</sup> Two of the messengers, Laurent and Messier, arrived safely. The others seem to have deserted.

the east, soon to burst with devastation over the fertile wilderness of the Illinois.

I have recounted the ferocious triumphs of the Iroquois in another volume.<sup>1</sup> Throughout a wide semicircle around their cantons, they had made the forest a solitude; destroyed the Hurons, exterminated the Neutrals and the Eries, reduced the formidable Andastes to helpless insignificance, swept the borders of the St. Lawrence with fire, spread terror and desolation among the Algonquins of Canada; and now, tired of peace, they were seeking, to borrow their own savage metaphor, new nations to devour. Yet it was not alone their homicidal fury that now impelled them to another war. Strange as it may seem, this war was in no small measure one of commercial advantage. They had long traded with the Dutch and English of New York, who gave them, in exchange for their furs, the guns, ammunition, knives, hatchets, kettles, beads, and brandy which had become indispensable to them. Game was scarce in their country. They must seek their beaver and other skins in the vacant territories of the tribes they had destroyed; but this did not content them. The French of Canada were seeking to secure a monopoly of the furs of the north and west; and, of late, the enterprises of La Salle on the tributaries of the Mississippi had especially roused the jealousy of the Iroquois, fomented, moreover, by Dutch and English traders.<sup>2</sup> These crafty savages would fain

<sup>1</sup> The Jesuits in North America.

<sup>2</sup> Duchesneau, in *Paris Docs.*, ix. 163.

reduce all these regions to subjection, and draw thence an exhaustless supply of furs, to be bartered for English goods with the traders of Albany. They turned their eyes first towards the Illinois, the most important, as well as one of the most accessible, of the western Algonquin tribes; and among La Salle's enemies were some in whom jealousy of a hated rival could so far override all the best interests of the colony that they did not scruple to urge on the Iroquois to an invasion which they hoped would prove his ruin. The chiefs convened, war was decreed, the war-dance was danced, the war-song sung, and five hundred warriors began their march. In their path lay the town of the Miamis, neighbors and kindred of the Illinois. It was always their policy to divide and conquer; and these forest Machiavels had intrigued so well among the Miamis, working craftily on their jealousy, that they induced them to join in the invasion, though there is every reason to believe that they had marked these infatuated allies as their next victims.<sup>1</sup>

Go to the banks of the Illinois where it flows by the village of Utica, and stand on the meadow that borders it on the north. In front glides the river, a musket-shot in width; and from the farther bank rises, with gradual slope, a range of wooded hills

<sup>1</sup> There had long been a rankling jealousy between the Miamis and the Illinois. According to Membre, La Salle's enemies had intrigued successfully among the former, as well as among the Iroquois, to induce them to take arms against the Illinois.



that hide from sight the vast prairie behind them. A mile or more on your left these gentle acclivities end abruptly in the lofty front of the great cliff, called by the French the Rock of St. Louis, looking boldly out from the forests that environ it; and, three miles distant on your right, you discern a gap in the steep bluffs that here bound the valley, marking the mouth of the river Vermilion, called Aramoni by the French.<sup>1</sup> Now stand in fancy on this same spot in the early autumn of the year 1680. You are in the midst of the great town of the Illinois, — hundreds of mat-covered lodges, and thousands of congregated savages. Enter one of their dwellings: they will not think you an intruder. Some friendly squaw will lay a mat for you by the fire; you may seat yourself upon it, smoke your pipe, and study the lodge and its inmates by the light that streams through the holes at the top. Three or four fires smoke and smoulder on the ground down the middle

<sup>1</sup> The above is from notes made on the spot. The following is La Salle's description of the locality in the *Relation des Découvertes*, written in 1681: "La rive gauche de la rivière, du côté du sud, est occupée par un long rocher, fort étroit et escarpé presque partout, à la réserve d'un endroit de plus d'une lieue de longueur, situé vis-à-vis du village, où le terrain, tout couvert de beaux chênes, s'étend par une pente douce jusqu'au bord de la rivière. Au delà de cette hauteur est une vaste plaine, qui s'étend bien loin du côté du sud, et qui est traversée par la rivière Aramoni, dont les bords sont couverts d'une lisière de bois peu large."

The Aramoni is laid down on the great manuscript map of Franquelin, 1684, and on the map of Coronelli, 1688. It is, without doubt, the Big Vermilion. *Aramoni* is the Illinois word for "red," or "vermilion." Starved Rock, or the Rock of St. Louis, is the highest and steepest escarpment of the *long rocher* above mentioned.

of the long arched structure; and, as to each fire there are two families, the place is somewhat crowded when all are present. But now there is breathing room, for many are in the fields. A squaw sits weaving a mat of rushes; a warrior, naked except his moccasins, and tattooed with fantastic devices, binds a stone arrow-head to its shaft, with the fresh sinews of a buffalo. Some lie asleep, some sit staring in vacancy, some are eating, some are squatted in lazy chat around a fire. The smoke brings water to your eyes; the fleas annoy you; small unkempt children, naked as young puppies, crawl about your knees and will not be repelled. You have seen enough; you rise and go out again into the sunlight. It is, if not a peaceful, at least a languid scene. A few voices break the stillness, mingled with the joyous chirping of crickets from the grass. Young men lie flat on their faces, basking in the sun; a group of their elders are smoking around a buffalo-skin on which they have just been playing a game of chance with cherry-stones. A lover and his mistress, perhaps, sit together under a shed of bark, without uttering a word. Not far off is the graveyard, where lie the dead of the village, some buried in the earth, some wrapped in skins and laid aloft on scaffolds, above the reach of wolves. In the corn-fields around, you see squaws at their labor, and children driving off intruding birds; and your eye ranges over the meadows beyond, spangled with the yellow blossoms of the resin-weed and the Rudbeckia,

or over the bordering hills still green with the foliage of summer.<sup>1</sup>

This, or something like it, one may safely affirm, was the aspect of the Illinois village at noon of the tenth of September.<sup>2</sup> In a hut apart from the rest, you would probably have found the Frenchmen. Among them was a man, not strong in person, and disabled, moreover, by the loss of a hand, yet in this den of barbarism betraying the language and bearing of one formed in the most polished civilization of Europe. This was Henri de Tonty. The others were young Boisrondet, the servant L'Espérance, and a Parisian youth named Étienne Renault. The

<sup>1</sup> The Illinois were an aggregation of distinct though kindred tribes,—the Kaskaskias, the Peorias, the Kahokias, the Tamaroas, the Moingona, and others. Their general character and habits were those of other Indian tribes; but they were reputed somewhat cowardly and slothful. In their manners, they were more licentious than many of their neighbors, and addicted to practices which are sometimes supposed to be the result of a perverted civilization. Young men enacting the part of women were frequently to be seen among them. These were held in great contempt. Some of the early travellers, both among the Illinois and among other tribes, where the same practice prevailed, mistook them for hermaphrodites. According to Charlevoix (*Journal Historique*, 303), this abuse was due in part to a superstition. The Miamis and Piankishaws were in close affinities of language and habits with the Illinois. All these tribes belonged to the great Algonquin family. The first impressions which the French received of them, as recorded in the *Relation* of 1671, were singularly favorable; but a closer acquaintance did not confirm them. The Illinois traded with the lake tribes, to whom they carried slaves taken in war, receiving in exchange guns, hatchets, and other French goods. Marquette in *Relation*, 1670, 91.

<sup>2</sup> This is Membre's date. The narratives differ as to the day, though all agree as to the month.

friars, Membré and Ribourde, were not in the village, but at a hut a league distant, whither they had gone to make a "retreat" for prayer and meditation. Their missionary labors had not been fruitful; they had made no converts, and were in despair at the intractable character of the objects of their zeal. As for the other Frenchmen, time, doubtless, hung heavy on their hands; for nothing can surpass the vacant monotony of an Indian town when there is neither hunting, nor war, nor feasts, nor dances, nor gambling, to beguile the lagging hours.

Suddenly the village was wakened from its lethargy as by the crash of a thunderbolt. A Shawanoe, lately here on a visit, had left his Illinois friends to return home. He now reappeared, crossing the river in hot haste, with the announcement that he had met, on his way, an army of Iroquois approaching to attack them. All was panic and confusion. The lodges disgorged their frightened inmates; women and children screamed, startled warriors snatched their weapons. There were less than five hundred of them, for the greater part of the young men had gone to war. A crowd of excited savages thronged about Tonty and his Frenchmen, already objects of their suspicion, charging them, with furious gesticulation, with having stirred up their enemies to invade them. Tonty defended himself in broken Illinois, but the naked mob were but half convinced. They seized the forge and tools and flung them into the river, with all the goods that had

been saved from the deserters; then, distrusting their power to defend themselves, they manned the wooden canoes which lay in multitudes by the bank, embarked their women and children, and paddled down the stream to that island of dry land in the midst of marshes which La Salle afterwards found filled with their deserted huts. Sixty warriors remained here to guard them, and the rest returned to the village. All night long fires blazed along the shore. The excited warriors greased their bodies, painted their faces, defeathered their heads, sang their war-songs, danced, stamped, yelled, and brandished their hatchets, to work up their courage to face the crisis. The morning came, and with it came the Iroquois.

Young warriors had gone out as scouts, and now they returned. They had seen the enemy in the line of forest that bordered the river Aramoni, or Vermilion, and had stealthily reconnoitred them. They were very numerous,<sup>1</sup> and armed for the most part with guns, pistols, and swords. Some had bucklers of wood or raw-hide, and some wore those corselets of tough twigs interwoven with cordage which their fathers had used when fire-arms were unknown. The scouts added more, for they declared that they had seen a Jesuit among the Iroquois; nay,

<sup>1</sup> The *Relation des Découvertes* says, five hundred Iroquois and one hundred Shawanoes. Membre says that the allies were Miamis. He is no doubt right, as the Miamis had promised their aid, and the Shawanoes were at peace with the Illinois. Tonty is silent on the point.

that La Salle himself was there, whence it must follow that Tonty and his men were enemies and traitors. The supposed Jesuit was but an Iroquois chief arrayed in a black hat, doublet, and stockings; while another, equipped after a somewhat similar fashion, passed in the distance for La Salle. But the Illinois were furious. Tonty's life hung by a hair. A crowd of savages surrounded him, mad with rage and terror. He had come lately from Europe, and knew little of Indians, but, as the friar Membré says of him, "he was full of intelligence and courage," and when they heard him declare that he and his Frenchmen would go with them to fight the Iroquois, their threats grew less clamorous and their eyes glittered with a less deadly lustre.

Whooping and screeching, they ran to their canoes, crossed the river, climbed the woody hill, and swarmed down upon the plain beyond. About a hundred of them had guns; the rest were armed with bows and arrows. They were now face to face with the enemy, who had emerged from the woods of the Vermilion, and were advancing on the open prairie. With unwonted spirit, for their repute as warriors was by no means high, the Illinois began, after their fashion, to charge; that is, they leaped, yelled, and shot off bullets and arrows, advancing as they did so; while the Iroquois replied with gymnastics no less agile and howlings no less terrific, mingled with the rapid clatter of their guns. Tonty saw that it would go hard with his allies. It was of the last



moment to stop the fight, if possible. The Iroquois were, or professed to be, at peace with the French; and, taking counsel of his courage, he resolved on an attempt to mediate, which may well be called a desperate one. He laid aside his gun, took in his hand a wampum belt as a flag of truce, and walked forward to meet the savage multitude, attended by Boisrondet, another Frenchman, and a young Illinois who had the hardihood to accompany him. The guns of the Iroquois still flashed thick and fast. Some of them were aimed at him, on which he sent back the two Frenchmen and the Illinois, and advanced alone, holding out the wampum belt.<sup>1</sup> A moment more, and he was among the infuriated warriors. It was a frightful spectacle, — the contorted forms, bounding, crouching, twisting, to deal or dodge the shot; the small keen eyes that shone like an angry snake's; the parted lips peeling their

<sup>1</sup> Membre says that he went with Tonty: "J'étois aussi à côté du Sieur de Tonty." This is an invention of the friar's vanity. "Les deux pères Récollets étoient alors dans une cabane à une lieue du village, où ils s'étoient retirés pour faire une espèce de retraite, et ils ne furent avertis de l'arrivée des Iroquois que dans le temps du combat." — *Relation des Découvertes*. "Je rencontrai en chemin les pères Gabriel et Zenobe Membre, qui cherchoient de mes nouvelles." — Tonty, *Mémoire*, 1693. This was on his return from the Iroquois. The *Relation* confirms the statement, as far as concerns Membre: "Il rencontra le Père Zenobe [*Membre*], qui venoit pour le secourir, aiant été averti du combat et de sa blessure."

The perverted *Dernières Découvertes*, published without authority, under Tonty's name, says that he was attended by a slave, whom the Illinois sent with him as interpreter. In his narrative of 1684, Tonty speaks of a Sokokis (Saco) Indian who was with the Iroquois, and who spoke French enough to serve as interpreter.



fiendish yells; the painted features writhing with fear and fury, and every passion of an Indian fight, — man, wolf, and devil, all in one.<sup>1</sup> With his swarthy complexion and his half-savage dress, they thought he was an Indian, and thronged about him, glaring murder. A young warrior stabbed at his heart with a knife, but the point glanced aside against a rib, inflicting only a deep gash. A chief called out that, as his ears were not pierced, he must be a Frenchman. On this, some of them tried to stop the bleeding, and led him to the rear, where an angry parley ensued, while the yells and firing still resounded in the front. Tonty, breathless, and bleeding at the mouth with the force of the blow he had received, found words to declare that the Illinois were under the protection of the King and the governor of Canada, and to demand that they should be left in peace.<sup>2</sup>

A young Iroquois snatched Tonty's hat, placed it on the end of his gun, and displayed it to the Illinois, who, thereupon thinking he was killed,

<sup>1</sup> Being once in an encampment of Sioux when a quarrel broke out, and the adverse factions raised the war-whoop and began to fire at each other, I had a good, though for the moment a rather dangerous, opportunity of seeing the demeanor of Indians at the beginning of a fight. The fray was quelled before much mischief was done, by the vigorous intervention of the elder warriors, who ran between the combatants.

<sup>2</sup> "Je leur fis connoître que les Isinois étoient sous la protection du roy de France et du gouverneur du pays, que j'étois surpris qu'ils vou lussent rompre avec les François et qu'ils voulussent attendre [*sic*] à une paix." — Tonty, *Mémoire*, 1693.

renewed the fight; and the firing in front clattered more angrily than before. A warrior ran in, crying out that the Iroquois were giving ground, and that there were Frenchmen among the Illinois, who fired at them. On this, the clamor around Tonty was redoubled. Some wished to kill him at once; others resisted. "I was never," he writes, "in such perplexity; for at that moment there was an Iroquois behind me, with a knife in his hand, lifting my hair as if he were going to scalp me. I thought it was all over with me, and that my best hope was that they would knock me in the head instead of burning me, as I believed they would do." In fact, a Seneca chief demanded that he should be burned; while an Onondaga chief, a friend of La Salle, was for setting him free. The dispute grew fierce and hot. Tonty told them that the Illinois were twelve hundred strong, and that sixty Frenchmen were at the village, ready to back them. This invention, though not fully believed, had no little effect. The friendly Onondaga carried his point; and the Iroquois, having failed to surprise their enemies, as they had hoped, now saw an opportunity to delude them by a truce. They sent back Tonty with a belt of peace: he held it aloft in sight of the Illinois; chiefs and old warriors ran to stop the fight; the yells and the firing ceased; and Tonty, like one waked from a hideous nightmare, dizzy, almost fainting with loss of blood, staggered across the intervening prairie, to rejoin his friends. He was met by the two friars, Ribourde

and Membré, who in their secluded hut, a league from the village, had but lately heard of what was passing, and who now, with benedictions and thanksgiving, ran to embrace him as a man escaped from the jaws of death.

The Illinois now withdrew, re-embarking in their canoes, and crossing again to their lodges; but scarcely had they reached them, when their enemies appeared at the edge of the forest on the opposite bank. Many found means to cross, and, under the pretext of seeking for provisions, began to hover in bands about the skirts of the town, constantly increasing in numbers. Had the Illinois dared to remain, a massacre would doubtless have ensued; but they knew their foe too well, set fire to their lodges, embarked in haste, and paddled down the stream to rejoin their women and children at the sanctuary among the morasses. The whole body of the Iroquois now crossed the river, took possession of the abandoned town, building for themselves a rude redoubt or fort of the trunks of trees and of the posts and poles forming the framework of the lodges which escaped the fire. Here they ensconced themselves, and finished the work of havoc at their leisure.

Tonty and his companions still occupied their hut; but the Iroquois, becoming suspicious of them, forced them to remove to the fort, crowded as it was with the savage crew. On the second day, there was an alarm. The Illinois appeared in numbers on the low hills, half a mile behind the town; and the Iroquois,

who had felt their courage, and who had been told by Tonty that they were twice as numerous as themselves, showed symptoms of no little uneasiness. They proposed that he should act as mediator, to which he gladly assented, and crossed the meadow towards the Illinois, accompanied by Membré, and by an Iroquois who was sent as a hostage. The Illinois hailed the overtures with delight, gave the ambassadors some refreshment, which they sorely needed, and sent back with them a young man of their nation as a hostage on their part. This indiscreet youth nearly proved the ruin of the negotiation; for he was no sooner among the Iroquois than he showed such an eagerness to close the treaty, made such promises, professed such gratitude, and betrayed so rashly the numerical weakness of the Illinois, that he revived all the insolence of the invaders. They turned furiously upon Tonty, and charged him with having robbed them of the glory and the spoils of victory. "Where are all your Illinois warriors, and where are the sixty Frenchmen that you said were among them?" It needed all Tonty's tact and coolness to extricate himself from this new danger.

The treaty was at length concluded; but scarcely was it made, when the Iroquois prepared to break it, and set about constructing canoes of elm-bark, in which to attack the Illinois women and children in their island sanctuary. Tonty warned his allies that the pretended peace was but a snare for their destruction. The Iroquois, on their part, grew hourly more

jealous of him, and would certainly have killed him, had it not been their policy to keep the peace with Frontenac and the French.

Several days after, they summoned him and Membéré to a council. Six packs of beaver-skins were brought in; and the savage orator presented them to Tonty in turn, explaining their meaning as he did so. The first two were to declare that the children of Count Frontenac — that is, the Illinois — should not be eaten; the next was a plaster to heal Tonty's wound; the next was oil wherewith to anoint him and Membéré, that they might not be fatigued in travelling; the next proclaimed that the sun was bright; and the sixth and last required them to decamp and go home.<sup>1</sup> Tonty thanked them for their gifts, but demanded when they themselves meant to go and leave the Illinois in peace. At this, the conclave grew angry; and, despite their late pledge, some of them said that before they went they would eat Illinois flesh. Tonty instantly kicked away the packs of beaver-skins, the Indian symbol of the scornful rejection of a proposal, telling them that since they meant to eat the governor's children he would have none of their presents. The chiefs,

<sup>1</sup> An Indian speech, it will be remembered, is without validity if not confirmed by presents, each of which has its special interpretation. The meaning of the fifth pack of beaver, informing Tonty that the sun was bright, — “que le soleil étoit beau,” that is, that the weather was favorable for travelling, — is curiously misconceived by the editor of the *Dernières Découvertes*, who improves upon his original by substituting the words “par le cinquième paquet ils nous exhortoient à adorer le Soleil.”

in a rage, rose and drove him from the lodge. The French withdrew to their hut, where they stood all night on the watch, expecting an attack, and resolved to sell their lives dearly. At daybreak, the chiefs ordered them to begone.

Tonty, with admirable fidelity and courage, had done all in the power of man to protect the allies of Canada against their ferocious assailants; and he thought it unwise to persist further in a course which could lead to no good, and which would probably end in the destruction of the whole party. He embarked in a leaky canoe with Membré, Ribourde, Boisrondet, and the remaining two men, and began to ascend the river. After paddling about five leagues, they landed to dry their baggage and repair their crazy vessel; when Father Ribourde, breviary in hand, strolled across the sunny meadows for an hour of meditation among the neighboring groves. Evening approached, and he did not return. Tonty, with one of the men, went to look for him, and, following his tracks, presently discovered those of a band of Indians, who had apparently seized or murdered him. Still, they did not despair. They fired their guns to guide him, should he still be alive; built a huge fire by the bank, and then, crossing the river, lay watching it from the other side. At midnight, they saw the figure of a man hovering around the blaze; then many more appeared, but Ribourde was not among them. In truth, a band of Kickapoos, enemies of the Iroquois, about whose camp they had



been prowling in quest of scalps, had met and wantonly murdered the inoffensive old man. They carried his scalp to their village, and danced round it in triumph, pretending to have taken it from an enemy. Thus, in his sixty-fifth year, the only heir of a wealthy Burgundian house perished under the war-clubs of the savages for whose salvation he had renounced station, ease, and affluence.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile, a hideous scene was enacted at the ruined village of the Illinois. Their savage foes, balked of a living prey, wreaked their fury on the dead. They dug up the graves; they threw down the scaffolds. Some of the bodies they burned; some they threw to the dogs; some, it is affirmed, they ate.<sup>2</sup> Placing the skulls on stakes as trophies, they turned to pursue the Illinois, who, when the French withdrew, had abandoned their asylum and retreated down the river. The Iroquois, still, it seems, in awe of them, followed them along the opposite bank, each night encamping face to face

<sup>1</sup> Tonty, *Mémoire*; Membré in Le Clerc, ii. 191. Hennepin, who hated Tonty, unjustly charges him with having abandoned the search too soon, admitting, however, that it would have been useless to continue it. This part of his narrative is a perversion of Membré's account.

<sup>2</sup> "Cependant les Iroquois, aussitôt après le départ du Sr. de Tonty, exercèrent leur rage sur les corps morts des Illinois, qu'ils déterrèrent ou abbattèrent de dessus les échafauds où les Illinois les laissent longtemps exposés avant que de les mettre en terre. Ils en brûlèrent la plus grande partie, ils en mangèrent même quelques uns, et jettèrent le reste aux chiens. Ils plantèrent les têtes de ces cadavres à demi décharnés sur des pieux," etc.—*Relation des Découvertes*.



with them; and thus the adverse bands moved slowly southward, till they were near the mouth of the river. Hitherto, the compact array of the Illinois had held their enemies in check; but now, suffering from hunger, and lulled into security by the assurances of the Iroquois that their object was not to destroy them, but only to drive them from the country, they rashly separated into their several tribes. Some descended the Mississippi; some, more prudent, crossed to the western side. One of their principal tribes, the Tamaroas, more credulous than the rest, had the fatuity to remain near the mouth of the Illinois, where they were speedily assailed by all the force of the Iroquois. The men fled, and very few of them were killed; but the women and children were captured to the number, it is said, of seven hundred.<sup>1</sup> Then followed that scene of torture of which, some two weeks later, La Salle saw the revolting traces.<sup>2</sup> Sated, at length, with horrors, the conquerors withdrew, leading with them a host of captives, and exulting in their triumphs over women, children, and the dead.

After the death of Father Ribourde, Tonty and his companions remained searching for him till noon

<sup>1</sup> *Relation des Découvertes*; Frontenac to the King, *N. Y. Col. Docs.*, ix. 147. A memoir of Duchesneau makes the number twelve hundred.

<sup>2</sup> "Ils [*les Illinois*] trouvèrent dans leur campement des carcasses de leurs enfans que ces anthropophages avoient mangez, ne voulant même d'autre nourriture que la chair de ces infortunez." — *La Pothé-rie*, ii. 145, 146. Compare note, *ante*, p. 211.

of the next day, and then in despair of again seeing him, resumed their journey. They ascended the river, leaving no token of their passage at the junction of its northern and southern branches. For food, they gathered acorns and dug roots in the meadows. Their canoe proved utterly worthless; and, feeble as they were, they set out on foot for Lake Michigan. Boisrondet wandered off, and was lost. He had dropped the flint of his gun, and he had no bullets; but he cut a pewter porringer into slugs, with which he shot wild turkeys by discharging his piece with a firebrand, and after several days he had the good fortune to rejoin the party. Their object was to reach the Pottawattamies of Green Bay. Had they aimed at Michilimackinac, they would have found an asylum with La Forest at the fort on the St. Joseph; but unhappily they passed westward of that post, and, by way of Chicago, followed the borders of Lake Michigan northward. The cold was intense; and it was no easy task to grub up wild onions from the frozen ground to save themselves from starving. Tonty fell ill of a fever and a swelling of the limbs, which disabled him from traveling, and hence ensued a long delay. At length they neared Green Bay, where they would have starved, had they not gleaned a few ears of corn and frozen squashes in the fields of an empty Indian town.

This enabled them to reach the bay, and having patched an old canoe which they had the good luck to find, they embarked in it; whereupon, says Tonty,

“there rose a northwest wind, which lasted five days, with driving snow. We consumed all our food; and not knowing what to do next, we resolved to go back to the deserted town, and die by a warm fire in one of the wigwams. On our way, we saw a smoke; but our joy was short, for when we reached the fire we found nobody there. We spent the night by it; and before morning the bay froze. We tried to break a way for our canoe through the ice, but could not; and therefore we determined to stay there another night, and make moccasins in order to reach the town. We made some out of Father Gabriel’s cloak. I was angry with Étienne Renault for not finishing his; but he excused himself on account of illness, because he had a great oppression of the stomach, caused by eating a piece of an Indian shield of raw-hide, which he could not digest. His delay proved our salvation; for the next day, December fourth, as I was urging him to finish the moccasins, and he was still excusing himself on the score of his malady, a party of Kiskakon Ottawas, who were on their way to the Pottawattamies, saw the smoke of our fire, and came to us. We gave them such a welcome as was never seen before. They took us into their canoes, and carried us to an Indian village, only two leagues off. There we found five Frenchmen, who received us kindly, and all the Indians seemed to take pleasure in sending us food; so that, after thirty-four days of starvation, we found our famine turned to abundance.”

This hospitable village belonged to the Pottawatamies, and was under the sway of the chief who had befriended La Salle the year before, and who was wont to say that he knew but three great captains in the world, — Frontenac, La Salle, and himself.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Membré in Le Clerc, ii. 199. The other authorities for the foregoing chapter are the letters of La Salle, the *Relation des Découvertes*, in which portions of them are embodied, and the two narratives of Tonty, of 1684 and 1693. They all agree in essential points.

In his letters of this period, La Salle dwells at great length on the devices by which, as he believed, his enemies tried to ruin him and his enterprise. He is particularly severe against the Jesuit Allouez, whom he charges with intriguing “pour commencer la guerre entre les Iroquois et les Illinois par le moyen des Miamis qu’on engageoit dans cette négociation afin ou de me faire massacrer avec mes gens par quelqu’une de ces nations ou de me brouiller avec les Iroquois.” — *Lettre (à Thouret?)*, 22 Août, 1682. He gives in detail the circumstances on which this suspicion rests, but which are not convincing. He says, further, that the Jesuits gave out that Tonty was dead in order to discourage the men going to his relief, and that Allouez encouraged the deserters, “leur servoit de conseil, bénit mesme leurs balles, et les asseura plusieurs fois que M. de Tonty auroit la teste cassée.” He also affirms that great pains were taken to spread the report that he was himself dead. A Kiskakon Indian, he says, was sent to Tonty with a story to this effect; while a Huron named Scortas was sent to him (La Salle) with false news of the death of Tonty. The latter confirms this statement, and adds that the Illinois had been told “que M. de la Salle estoit venu en leur pays pour les donner à manger aux Iroquois.”

## THE ILLINOIS TOWN.

THE SITE OF THE GREAT ILLINOIS TOWN. — This has not till now been determined, though there have been various conjectures concerning it. From a study of the contemporary documents and maps, I became satisfied, first, that the branch of the river Illinois, called the “Big Vermilion,” was the *Aramoni* of the French explorers; and, secondly, that the cliff called “Starved Rock” was that known to the French as *Le Rocher*, or the Rock of St. Louis. If I was right in this conclusion, then the position of the Great Village was established; for there is abundant proof that it was on the north side of the river, above the *Aramoni*, and below *Le Rocher*. I accordingly went to the village of Utica, which, as I judged by the map, was very near the point in question, and mounted to the top of one of the hills immediately behind it, whence I could see the valley of the Illinois for miles, bounded on the farther side by a range of hills, in some parts rocky and precipitous, and in others covered with forests. Far on the right was a gap in these hills, through which the Big Vermilion flowed to join the Illinois; and somewhat towards the left, at the distance of a mile and a half, was a huge cliff, rising perpendicularly from the opposite margin of the river. This I assumed to be *Le Rocher* of the French, though from where I stood I was unable to discern the distinctive features which I was prepared to find in it. In every other respect, the scene before me was precisely what I had expected to see. There was a meadow on the hither side of the river, on which stood a farmhouse; and this, as it seemed to me, by its relations with surrounding objects, might be supposed to stand in the midst of the space once occupied by the Illinois town.

On the way down from the hill I met Mr. James Clark, the principal inhabitant of Utica, and one of the earliest settlers of this region. I accosted him, told him my objects, and requested

a half hour's conversation with him, at his leisure. He seemed interested in the inquiry, and said he would visit me early in the evening at the inn, where, accordingly, he soon appeared. The conversation took place in the porch, where a number of farmers and others were gathered. I asked Mr. Clark if any Indian remains were found in the neighborhood. "Yes," he replied, "plenty of them." I then inquired if there was any one spot where they were more numerous than elsewhere. "Yes," he answered again, pointing towards the farmhouse on the meadow; "on my farm down yonder by the river, my tenant ploughs up teeth and bones by the peck every spring, besides arrow-heads, beads, stone hatchets, and other things of that sort." I replied that this was precisely what I had expected, as I had been led to believe that the principal town of the Illinois Indians once covered that very spot. "If," I added, "I am right in this belief, the great rock beyond the river is the one which the first explorers occupied as a fort; and I can describe it to you from their accounts of it, though I have never seen it, except from the top of the hill where the trees on and around it prevented me from seeing any part but the front." The men present now gathered around to listen. "The rock," I continued, "is nearly a hundred and fifty feet high, and rises directly from the water. The front and two sides are perpendicular and inaccessible; but there is one place where it is possible for a man to climb up, though with difficulty. The top is large enough and level enough for houses and fortifications." Here several of the men exclaimed: "That's just it." "You've hit it exactly." I then asked if there was any other rock on that side of the river which could answer to the description. They all agreed that there was no such rock on either side, along the whole length of the river. I then said: "If the Indian town was in the place where I suppose it to have been, I can tell you the nature of the country which lies behind the hills on the farther side of the river, though I know nothing about it except what I have learned from writings nearly two centuries old. From the top of the hills, you look out upon a great prairie reaching as far as you can see, except that it is crossed by a belt of woods, following the course of a stream

which enters the main river a few miles below." (See *ante*, p. 221, *note*.) "You are exactly right again," replied Mr. Clark; "we call that belt of timber the 'Vermilion Woods,' and the stream is the Big Vermilion." "Then," I said, "the Big Vermilion is the river which the French called the Aramoni; 'Starved Rock' is the same on which they built a fort called St. Louis, in the year 1682; and your farm is on the site of the great town of the Illinois."

I spent the next day in examining these localities, and was fully confirmed in my conclusions. Mr. Clark's tenant showed me the spot where the human bones were ploughed up. It was no doubt the graveyard violated by the Iroquois. The Illinois returned to the village after their defeat, and long continued to occupy it. The scattered bones were probably collected and restored to their place of burial.



## CHAPTER XVII.

1680.

### THE ADVENTURES OF HENNEPIN.

HENNEPIN AN IMPOSTOR: HIS PRETENDED DISCOVERY; HIS ACTUAL DISCOVERY; CAPTURED BY THE SIOUX. — THE UPPER MISSISSIPPI.

It was on the last day of the winter that preceded the invasion of the Iroquois that Father Hennepin, with his two companions, Accau and Du Gay, had set out from Fort Crèvecœur to explore the Illinois to its mouth. It appears from his own later statements, as well as from those of Tonty, that more than this was expected of him, and that La Salle had instructed him to explore, not alone the Illinois, but also the Upper Mississippi. That he actually did so, there is no reasonable doubt; and could he have contented himself with telling the truth, his name would have stood high as a bold and vigorous discoverer. But his vicious attempts to malign his commander and plunder him of his laurels have wrapped his genuine merit in a cloud.

Hennepin's first book was published soon after his return from his travels, and while La Salle was still alive. In it he relates the accomplishment of the

instructions given him, without the smallest intimation that he did more.<sup>1</sup> Fourteen years after, when La Salle was dead, he published another edition of his travels,<sup>2</sup> in which he advanced a new and surprising pretension. Reasons connected with his personal safety, he declares, before compelled him to remain silent; but a time at length had come when the truth must be revealed. And he proceeds to affirm, that, before ascending the Mississippi, he, with his two men, explored its whole course from the Illinois to the sea, — thus anticipating the discovery which forms the crowning laurel of La Salle.

“I am resolved,” he says, “to make known here to the whole world the mystery of this discovery, which I have hitherto concealed, that I might not offend the Sieur de la Salle, who wished to keep all the glory and all the knowledge of it to himself. It is for this that he sacrificed many persons whose lives he exposed, to prevent them from making known what they had seen, and thereby crossing his secret plans. . . . I was certain that if I went down the Mississippi, he would not fail to traduce me to my superiors for not taking the northern route, which I was to have followed in accordance with his desire and the plan we had made together. But I saw myself on the point of dying of hunger, and knew not what to do; because the two men who were with

<sup>1</sup> *Description de la Louisiane, nouvellement découverte*, Paris, 1683.

<sup>2</sup> *Nouvelle Découverte d'un très grand Pays situé dans l'Amérique*, Utrecht, 1697.

me threatened openly to leave me in the night, and carry off the canoe and everything in it, if I prevented them from going down the river to the nations below. Finding myself in this dilemma, I thought that I ought not to hesitate, and that I ought to prefer my own safety to the violent passion which possessed the *Sieur de la Salle* of enjoying alone the glory of this discovery. The two men, seeing that I had made up my mind to follow them, promised me entire fidelity; so, after we had shaken hands together as a mutual pledge, we set out on our voyage.”<sup>1</sup>

He then proceeds to recount at length the particulars of his alleged exploration. The story was distrusted from the first.<sup>2</sup> Why had he not told it before? An excess of modesty, a lack of self-assertion, or a too sensitive reluctance to wound the susceptibilities of others, had never been found among his foibles. Yet some, perhaps, might have believed him, had he not in the first edition of his book gratuitously and distinctly declared that he did not make the voyage in question. “We had some designs,” he says, “of going down the river *Colbert* [*Mississippi*] as far as its mouth; but the tribes that took us prisoners gave us no time to navigate this river both up and down.”<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Nouvelle Découverte*, 248, 250, 251.

<sup>2</sup> See the preface of the Spanish translation by Don Sebastian Fernandez de Medrano, 1699, and also the letter of Gravier, dated 1701, in *Shea's Early Voyages on the Mississippi*. Barcia, Charlevoix, Kalm, and other early writers put a low value on Hennepin's veracity.

<sup>3</sup> *Description de la Louisiane*, 218.

In declaring to the world the achievement which he had so long concealed and so explicitly denied, the worthy missionary found himself in serious embarrassment. In his first book, he had stated that on the twelfth of March he left the mouth of the Illinois on his way northward, and that on the eleventh of April he was captured by the Sioux near the mouth of the Wisconsin, five hundred miles above. This would give him only a month to make his alleged canoe-voyage from the Illinois to the Gulf of Mexico, and again upward to the place of his capture, — a distance of three thousand two hundred and sixty miles. With his means of transportation, three months would have been insufficient.<sup>1</sup> He saw the difficulty; but, on the other hand, he saw that he could not greatly change either date without confusing the parts of his narrative which preceded and which followed. In this perplexity he chose a middle course, which only involved him in additional contradictions. Having, as he affirms, gone down to the Gulf and returned to the mouth of the Illinois, he set out thence to explore the river above; and he assigns the twenty-fourth of April as the date of this departure. This gives him forty-three days for

<sup>1</sup> La Salle, in the following year, with a far better equipment, was more than three months and a half in making the journey. A Mississippi trading-boat of the last generation, with sails and oars, ascending against the current, was thought to do remarkably well if it could make twenty miles a day. Hennepin, if we believe his own statements, must have ascended at an average rate of sixty miles, though his canoe was large and heavily laden.

his voyage to the mouth of the river and back. Looking further, we find that having left the Illinois on the twenty-fourth he paddled his canoe two hundred leagues northward, and was then captured by the Sioux on the twelfth of the same month. In short, he ensnares himself in a hopeless confusion of dates.<sup>1</sup>

Here, one would think, is sufficient reason for rejecting his story; and yet the general truth of the descriptions, and a certain verisimilitude which marks it, might easily deceive a careless reader and perplex a critical one. These, however, are easily explained. Six years before Hennepin published his pretended discovery, his brother friar, Father Chrétien Le Clerc, published an account of the Récollet missions among the Indians, under the title of “Établissement de la Foi.” This book, offensive to the Jesuits, is said to have been suppressed by order of government; but a few copies fortunately survive.<sup>2</sup> One of these is now before me. It contains the journal of Father Zenobe Membré, on his descent of the Mississippi in

<sup>1</sup> Hennepin here falls into gratuitous inconsistencies. In the edition of 1697, in order to gain a little time, he says that he left the Illinois on his voyage southward on the eighth of March, 1680; and yet in the preceding chapter he repeats the statement of the first edition, that he was detained at the Illinois by floating ice till the twelfth. Again, he says in the first edition that he was captured by the Sioux on the eleventh of April; and in the edition of 1697 he changes this date to the twelfth, without gaining any advantage by doing so.

<sup>2</sup> Le Clerc's book had been made the text of an attack on the Jesuits. See *Reflexions sur un Livre intitulé Premier Établissement de la Foi*. This piece is printed in the *Morale Pratique des Jésuites*.

1681, in company with La Salle. The slightest comparison of his narrative with that of Hennepin is sufficient to show that the latter framed his own story out of incidents and descriptions furnished by his brother missionary, often using his very words, and sometimes copying entire pages, with no other alterations than such as were necessary to make himself, instead of La Salle and his companions, the hero of the exploit. The records of literary piracy may be searched in vain for an act of depredation more recklessly impudent.<sup>1</sup>

Such being the case, what faith can we put in the rest of Hennepin's story? Fortunately, there are tests by which the earlier parts of his book can be

<sup>1</sup> Hennepin may have copied from the unpublished journal of Membre, which the latter had placed in the hands of his Superior; or he may have compiled from Le Clerc's book, relying on the suppression of the edition to prevent detection. He certainly saw and used it; for he elsewhere borrows the exact words of the editor. He is so careless that he steals from Membre passages which he might easily have written for himself; as, for example, a description of the opossum and another of the cougar,—animals with which he was acquainted. Compare the following pages of the *Nouvelle Découverte* with the corresponding pages of Le Clerc: Hennepin, 252, Le Clerc, ii. 217; H. 253, Le C. ii. 218; H. 257, Le C. ii. 221; H. 259, Le C. ii. 224; H. 262, Le C. ii. 226; H. 265, Le C. ii. 229; H. 267, Le C. ii. 233; H. 270, Le C. ii. 235; H. 280, Le C. ii. 240; H. 295, Le C. ii. 249; H. 296, Le C. ii. 250; H. 297, Le C. ii. 253; H. 299, Le C. ii. 254; H. 301, Le C. ii. 257. Some of these parallel passages will be found in Sparks's *Life of La Salle*, where this remarkable fraud was first fully exposed. In Shea's *Discovery of the Mississippi*, there is an excellent critical examination of Hennepin's works. His plagiarisms from Le Clerc are not confined to the passages cited above; for in his later editions he stole largely from other parts of the suppressed *Établissement de la Foi*.



tried; and, on the whole, they square exceedingly well with contemporary records of undoubted authenticity. Bating his exaggerations respecting the Falls of Niagara, his local descriptions, and even his estimates of distance, are generally accurate. He constantly, it is true, magnifies his own acts, and thrusts himself forward as one of the chiefs of an enterprise to the costs of which he had contributed nothing, and to which he was merely an appendage; and yet, till he reaches the Mississippi, there can be no doubt that in the main he tells the truth. As for his ascent of that river to the country of the Sioux, the general statement is fully confirmed by La Salle, Tonty, and other contemporary writers.<sup>1</sup> For the details of the journey we must rest on Hennepin alone, whose account of the country and of the peculiar traits of its Indian occupants afford, as far as they go, good evidence of truth. Indeed, this part of his narrative could only have been written by one well versed in the savage life of this northwestern region.<sup>2</sup> Trusting,

<sup>1</sup> It is certain that persons having the best means of information believed at the time in Hennepin's story of his journeys on the Upper Mississippi. The compiler of the *Relation des Découvertes*, who was in close relations with La Salle and those who acted with him, does not intimate a doubt of the truth of the report which Hennepin on his return gave to the Provincial Commissary of his Order, and which is in substance the same which he published two years later. The *Relation*, it is to be observed, was written only a few months after the return of Hennepin, and embodies the pith of his narrative of the Upper Mississippi, no part of which had then been published.

<sup>2</sup> In this connection, it is well to examine the various Sioux words which Hennepin uses incidentally, and which he must have



then, to his own guidance in the absence of better, let us follow in the wake of his adventurous canoe.

It was laden deeply with goods belonging to La Salle, and meant by him as presents to Indians on the way, though the travellers, it appears, proposed to use them in trading on their own account. The friar was still wrapped in his gray capote and hood, shod with sandals, and decorated with the cord of St. Francis. As for his two companions, Accau<sup>1</sup> and

acquired by personal intercourse with the tribe, as no Frenchman then understood the language. These words, as far as my information reaches, are in every instance correct. Thus, he says that the Sioux called his breviary a "bad spirit," — *Ouackanché*. *Wakanshe*, or *Wakanshecha*, would express the same meaning in modern English spelling. He says elsewhere that they called the guns of his companions *Manzaouackanché*, which he translates, "iron possessed with a bad spirit." The western Sioux to this day call a gun *Manzawakan*, "metal possessed with a spirit." *Chonga* (*shonka*), "a dog," *Ouasi* (*wahsee*), "a pine-tree," *Chinnen* (*shinnan*), "a robe," or "garment," and other words, are given correctly, with their interpretations. The word *Louis*, affirmed by Hennepin to mean "the sun," seems at first sight a wilful inaccuracy, as this is not the word used in general by the Sioux. The Yankton band of this people, however, call the sun *ouuee*, which, it is evident, represents the French pronunciation of *Louis*, omitting the initial letter. This Hennepin would be apt enough to supply, thereby conferring a compliment alike on himself, Louis Hennepin, and on the King, Louis XIV., who, to the indignation of his brother monarchs, had chosen the sun as his emblem.

Various trivial incidents touched upon by Hennepin, while recounting his life among the Sioux, seem to me to afford a strong presumption of an actual experience. I speak on this point with the more confidence, as the Indians in whose lodges I was once domesticated for several weeks belonged to a western band of the same people.

<sup>1</sup> Called *Ako* by Hennepin. In contemporary documents, it is written *Accau*, *Acau*, *D'Accau*, *Dacau*, *Dacan*, and *D'Accault*.

Du Gay, it is tolerably clear that the former was the real leader of the party, though Hennepin, after his custom, thrusts himself into the foremost place. Both were somewhat above the station of ordinary hired hands; and Du Gay had an uncle who was an ecclesiastic of good credit at Amiens, his native place.

In the forests that overhung the river the buds were feebly swelling with advancing spring. There was game enough. They killed buffalo, deer, beavers, wild turkeys, and now and then a bear swimming in the river. With these, and the fish which they caught in abundance, they fared sumptuously, though it was the season of Lent. They were exemplary, however, at their devotions. Hennepin said prayers at morning and night, and the *angelus* at noon, adding a petition to Saint Anthony of Padua that he would save them from the peril that beset their way. In truth, there was a lion in the path. The ferocious character of the Sioux, or Dacotah, who occupied the region of the Upper Mississippi, was already known to the French; and Hennepin, with excellent reason, prayed that it might be his fortune to meet them, not by night, but by day.

On the eleventh or twelfth of April, they stopped in the afternoon to repair their canoe; and Hennepin busied himself in daubing it with pitch, while the others cooked a turkey. Suddenly, a fleet of Sioux canoes swept into sight, bearing a war-party of a hundred and twenty naked savages, who on seeing

the travellers raised a hideous clamor; and, some leaping ashore and others into the water, they surrounded the astonished Frenchmen in an instant.<sup>1</sup> Hennepin held out the peace-pipe; but one of them snatched it from him. Next, he hastened to proffer a gift of Martinique tobacco, which was better received. Some of the old warriors repeated the name *Miamiha*, giving him to understand that they were a war-party, on the way to attack the Miamis; on which, Hennepin, with the help of signs and of marks which he drew on the sand with a stick, explained that the Miamis had gone across the Mississippi, beyond their reach. Hereupon, he says that three or four old men placed their hands on his head, and began a dismal wailing; while he with his handkerchief wiped away their tears, in order to evince sympathy with their affliction, from whatever cause arising. Notwithstanding this demonstration of tenderness, they refused to smoke with him in his peace-pipe, and forced him and his companions to embark and paddle across the river; while they all followed behind, uttering yells and howlings which froze the missionary's blood.

On reaching the farther side, they made their camp-fires, and allowed their prisoners to do the same. Accau and Du Gay slung their kettle; while

<sup>1</sup> The edition of 1683 says that there were thirty-three canoes: that of 1697 raises the number to fifty. The number of Indians is the same in both. The later narrative is more in detail than the former.

Hennepin, to propitiate the Sioux, carried to them two turkeys, of which there were several in the canoe. The warriors had seated themselves in a ring, to debate on the fate of the Frenchmen; and two chiefs presently explained to the friar, by significant signs, that it had been resolved that his head should be split with a war-club. This produced the effect which was no doubt intended. Hennepin ran to the canoe, and quickly returned with one of the men, both loaded with presents, which he threw into the midst of the assembly; and then, bowing his head, offered them at the same time a hatchet with which to kill him, if they wished to do so. His gifts and his submission seemed to appease them. They gave him and his companions a dish of beaver's flesh; but, to his great concern, they returned his peace-pipe, — an act which he interpreted as a sign of danger. That night the Frenchmen slept little, expecting to be murdered before morning. There was, in fact, a great division of opinion among the Sioux. Some were for killing them and taking their goods; while others, eager above all things that French traders should come among them with the knives, hatchets, and guns of which they had heard the value, contended that it would be impolitic to discourage the trade by putting to death its pioneers.

Scarcely had morning dawned on the anxious captives, when a young chief, naked, and painted from head to foot, appeared before them and asked for the pipe, which the friar gladly gave him. He filled it,

smoked it, made the warriors do the same, and, having given this hopeful pledge of amity, told the Frenchmen that, since the Miamis were out of reach, the war-party would return home, and that they must accompany them. To this Hennepin gladly agreed, having, as he declares, his great work of exploration so much at heart that he rejoiced in the prospect of achieving it even in their company.

He soon, however, had a foretaste of the affliction in store for him; for when he opened his breviary and began to mutter his morning devotion, his new companions gathered about him with faces that betrayed their superstitious terror, and gave him to understand that his book was a bad spirit with which he must hold no more converse. They thought, indeed, that he was muttering a charm for their destruction. Accau and Du Gay, conscious of the danger, begged the friar to dispense with his devotions, lest he and they alike should be tomahawked; but Hennepin says that his sense of duty rose superior to his fears, and that he was resolved to repeat his office at all hazards, though not until he had asked pardon of his two friends for thus imperilling their lives. Fortunately, he presently discovered a device by which his devotion and his prudence were completely reconciled. He ceased the muttering which had alarmed the Indians, and, with the breviary open on his knees, sang the service in loud and cheerful tones. As this had no savor of sorcery, and as they now imagined that the book was teaching its owner

to sing for their amusement, they conceived a favorable opinion of both alike.

These Sioux, it may be observed, were the ancestors of those who committed the horrible but not unprovoked massacres of 1862, in the valley of the St. Peter. Hennepin complains bitterly of their treatment of him, which, however, seems to have been tolerably good. Afraid that he would lag behind, as his canoe was heavy and slow,<sup>1</sup> they placed several warriors in it to aid him and his men in paddling. They kept on their way from morning till night, building huts for their bivouac when it rained, and sleeping on the open ground when the weather was fair, — which, says Hennepin, “gave us a good opportunity to contemplate the moon and stars.” The three Frenchmen took the precaution of sleeping at the side of the young chief who had been the first to smoke the peace-pipe, and who seemed inclined to befriend them; but there was another chief, one Aquipaguetin, a crafty old savage, who having lost a son in war with the Miamis, was angry that the party had abandoned their expedition, and thus deprived him of his revenge. He therefore kept up a dismal lament through half the night; while other old men, crouching over Hennepin as he lay trying to sleep, stroked him with their hands, and uttered wailings so lugubrious that he was forced to

<sup>1</sup> And yet it had, by his account, made a distance of thirteen hundred and eighty miles from the mouth of the Mississippi upward in twenty-four days!



the belief that he had been doomed to death, and that they were charitably bemoaning his fate.<sup>1</sup>

One night, the captives were, for some reason, unable to bivouac near their protector, and were forced to make their fire at the end of the camp. Here they were soon beset by a crowd of Indians, who told them that Aquipaguetin had at length resolved to tomahawk them. The malcontents were gathered in a knot at a little distance, and Hennepin hastened to appease them by another gift of knives and tobacco. This was but one of the devices of the old chief to deprive them of their goods without robbing them outright. He had with him the bones of a deceased relative, which he was carrying home wrapped in skins prepared with smoke after the Indian fashion, and gayly decorated with bands of dyed porcupine quills. He would summon his warriors, and placing these relics in the midst of the assembly, call on all present to smoke in their honor; after which, Hennepin was required to offer a more substantial tribute in the shape of cloth, beads, hatchets, tobacco, and the like, to be laid upon the bundle of bones. The gifts thus acquired were then, in the name of the deceased, distributed among the persons present.

<sup>1</sup> This weeping and wailing over Hennepin once seemed to me an anomaly in his account of Sioux manners, as I am not aware that such practices are to be found among them at present. They are mentioned, however, by other early writers. Le Sueur, who was among them in 1699-1700, was wept over no less than Hennepin. See the abstract of his journal in La Harpe.



On one occasion, Aquipaguetin killed a bear, and invited the chiefs and warriors to feast upon it. They accordingly assembled on a prairie, west of the river, where, after the banquet, they danced a "medicine-dance." They were all painted from head to foot, with their hair oiled, garnished with red and white feathers, and powdered with the down of birds. In this guise they set their arms akimbo, and fell to stamping with such fury that the hard prairie was dented with the prints of their moccasins; while the chief's son, crying at the top of his throat, gave to each in turn the pipe of war. Meanwhile, the chief himself, singing in a loud and rueful voice, placed his hands on the heads of the three Frenchmen, and from time to time interrupted his music to utter a vehement harangue. Hennepin could not understand the words, but his heart sank as the conviction grew strong within him that these ceremonies tended to his destruction. It seems, however, that, after all the chief's efforts, his party was in the minority, the greater part being adverse to either killing or robbing the three strangers.

Every morning, at daybreak, an old warrior shouted the signal of departure; and the recumbent savages leaped up, manned their birchen fleet, and plied their paddles against the current, often without waiting to break their fast. Sometimes they stopped for a buffalo-hunt on the neighboring prairies; and there was no lack of provisions. They passed Lake Pepin, which Hennepin called the Lake of Tears, by reason

of the howlings and lamentations here uttered over him by Aquipaguetin, and nineteen days after his capture landed near the site of St. Paul. The father's sorrows now began in earnest. The Indians broke his canoe to pieces, having first hidden their own among the alder-bushes. As they belonged to different bands and different villages, their mutual jealousy now overcame all their prudence; and each proceeded to claim his share of the captives and the booty. Happily, they made an amicable distribution, or it would have fared ill with the three Frenchmen; and each taking his share, not forgetting the priestly vestments of Hennepin, the splendor of which they could not sufficiently admire, they set out across the country for their villages, which lay towards the north in the neighborhood of Lake Buade, now called Mille Lac.

Being, says Hennepin, exceedingly tall and active, they walked at a prodigious speed, insomuch that no European could long keep pace with them. Though the month of May had begun, there were frosts at night; and the marshes and ponds were glazed with ice, which cut the missionary's legs as he waded through. They swam the larger streams, and Hennepin nearly perished with cold as he emerged from the icy current. His two companions, who were smaller than he, and who could not swim, were carried over on the backs of the Indians. They showed, however, no little endurance; and he declares that he should have dropped by the way, but for their

support. Seeing him disposed to lag, the Indians, to spur him on, set fire to the dry grass behind him, and then, taking him by the hands, ran forward with him to escape the flames. To add to his misery, he was nearly famished, as they gave him only a small piece of smoked meat once a day, though it does not appear that they themselves fared better. On the fifth day, being by this time in extremity, he saw a crowd of squaws and children approaching over the prairie, and presently descried the bark lodges of an Indian town. The goal was reached. He was among the homes of the Sioux.

















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